Thursday, March 26, 2009 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 24 / No. 108 P10 www.inquirer.net

Palace backs probing Erap over toy gun

By Christian V. Esguerra and Christine O. Avendaño

SAN JUAN, RIZAL—WHATEVER happened to common sense?

Malacañang is supporting a move by the Philippine National Police to investigate former President Joseph Estrada and Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay for riding on a military jeep with a mounted replica machine gun.

But the Palace-backed plan of the PNP quickly drew return fire.

Hardly amused, Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile said law enforcers might as well go after "all

PALACE/A4

South Africa peace confab postponed over Dalai Lama WORLD/A23

Ombudsman to file graft raps vs DPWH execs over WB's $33-M road project NEWS/A2

Job update: 2 firms close, 5 new prospects up in Cavite Export Zone ACROSS/A15

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

7 food products of peanut butter maker banned

THE PUBLIC MAY BE TURNING sour over a company that has spent 35 years spreading the sweet life.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III has ordered the immediate ban and recall of seven food products of Ramaya Food Manufacturing Inc., a peanut butter maker.

The seven products were in addition to Lady's Sweet and Creamy Peanut Butter, and Yummy Sweet and Creamy Peanut Butter that have been found to be contaminated with the Salmonella bacteria.

The bacteria cause gastrointestinal diseases and typhoid fever.

"The Department [of Health] declares the food products identified be-

FOODS/A19

SUMMERTIME AND THE LIVING IS EASY So goes the song that plays ascendingly well in the mind one sun-very beachfront of Boracay. And it would seem the world has come calling to its shores.

'GMA behind Cha-cha'

JDV: Mikey offered speakership for my support

By Michael Lim Ubac and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo is behind a move to amend the Constitution that is being pushed by her son in Congress.

Rep. Mikey Arroyo attempted but failed to enlist the support of Rep. Jose de Venecia in exchange for his reinstatement as House Speaker, the former Congress leader said.

De Venecia yesterday said that Representatives Arroyo and Mauricio Domogan came to his office two days before the House adjourned for a Lenten break March 5 to request him to shepherd the passage of the draft resolution calling for a constituent assembly (Con-ass).

In return, De Venecia said he was offered back the speakership stripped from him in what was described as a "political assassination" after his namesake son exposed the NBN-ZTE deal with China. Mikey and his brother-congressman, Dato, engineered the ouster.

"I preempted them by saying 'Yes,'"

DNA SEEKING/A4

TODAY BORACAY, TOMORROW DIWARAN This island under the Coron sun in Palawan is just the place to de-summer. The Banyan Tree Holdings Ltd. thinks so, too, and is developing the 55-ha stretch by the waters' edge into a five-star resort. President Macapagal-Arroyo (below) and Palawan Gov. Joel Reyes attend the groundbreaking rites.

CORON/A10

Coron islet to be next Asian tourism jewel

By Nita Catherine Calleja

CORON, PALAWAN—STAND aside, Phuket. Here comes Diwaran.

By 2012, the 55-hectare Diwaran Island, part of Coron Reefs in northern Palawan, will be transformed into the "single largest integrated island resort in all Asia."

This is the hope of Ho Kwon Ping, the Singaporean executive chair of Banyan Tree Holdings, a big developer of resorts, hotels, spas and residential homes in the Asia Pacific.

He spoke at the groundbreaking ceremony of the planned resort on the largely uninhabited island yesterday attended by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Dressed in casual attire, Mr

CORON/A10

4 out of 10 Filipinos don't favor Cha-cha

A PULSE ASIA SURVEY LAST MONTH showed that four to 10 Filipinos were not in favor of amending the 1987 Constitution.

The survey, conducted on Feb. 2-15 and released yesterday, found that 42 percent were not in favor of changing the Constitution now, while 33 percent supported the move and 25 percent were undecided.

Between November 2008 and February 2009, the overall percentage of those not in favor of Charter change (Cha-cha) remained constant, while there was a fi-

4 OUT OF 10/A6

2 Alabang kids snatched; ₱1.5M ransom paid

By Aelyn dela Cruz
Contributor

TWO BROTHERS, BOTH HIGH school students, were kidnapped on March 19 and were released five days later upon their parents' payment of ₱1.5 million in ransom, according to police sources.

Teresita Ang-See of the Citizens' Action Against Crime and Corruption (CACC) yesterday confirmed the kidnapping, saying it was only one of a series of abductions that suddenly became frequent in the first quarter of the year.

Ang-See said the boys—one study-

2 ALABANG/A6

Church brings activist's case to US Congress, seeks review of RP aid

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—THE EPISCOPAL Church of the United States has presented the case of a missing Baguio activist to the US Congress in seeking a review of the military aid appropriated for the Philippines.

Rev. Canon Brian Grieves, director of the Advocacy Center of the Episcopal Church, discussed the fate of activist Jurado Balao when he testified on March 18 before the US House committee on appropriations' subcommittee on state

CHURCH/A6

Let drivers be: Let them wear 'tsinelas'

By Leila B. Salaverria

WHETHER THEY'RE JOSEPHINA-ians or Havaianas, please don't punish drivers of public utility vehicles (PUVs) for wearing tsinelas (slippers), transport group leaders urged government yesterday.

GOV'T TOLD/A6

Top Google execs stick to $1 salaries

SAN FRANCISCO—GOOGLE INC. CEO Eric Schmidt and cofounders Larry Page and Sergey Brin maintained their traditional salaries of $1 last year even as the value of their combined stakes in the Internet search leader plunged by nearly $26 billion.

The paltry paychecks, disclosed on Tuesday in a regulatory filing, come as no surprise because Schmidt, Page and Brin have insisted on their annual salaries remaining at $1 since Google went public in 2004.

The trio also don't get any bonuses or

TOP GOOGLE/A19

Sarge lights up runways and other unsung soldiers' stories

By Jocelyn R. Uy

ONE MIDNIGHT FOUR YEARS AGO, President Macapagal-Arroyo had to cut short her visit to Tuguegarao City and fly back to Manila.

If not for the 60 portable runway lights—shipped all the way from Sangley Point in Cavite—the pitch-dark airstrip in the capital city of Cagayan province would not have allowed the President's plane to take off.

Thanks to T/Sgt. Salvador Ibarra-ola Jr., pioneer of the portable runway lighting system, all the other air bases nationwide now gleam in bright red, blue and white to ensure the safe touchdowns and exits of the Air Force's limited aircraft.

Ibarraolaeche's inventions allowed the cash-strapped Air Force to save roughly ₱40 million for every portable runway light system made for every air base in the country.

The Navy has likewise resisted spending millions of pesos to automate the recording, updating and monitoring of operational information of its battleships and patrol vessels.

Last year, Data Processor 2nd Class Bernyr Colindo single-handedly de-

SARGE/A11

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

SUERTRES

8	2	1
4	8	9
7	5	5

FOUR DIGIT

1	9	3	6
7	9	3	6

8 2 1 5

MEGALOTTO 6/45

2 14 18 20 29 38

P10,436,452.20

17 DPWH execs face raps

Ombudsman finds 'collusion' in WB road project

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

SAYING IT UNCOVERED AN "INDICATION OF COLLUSION" between officials of the Department of Public Works and Highways and private contractors, the Office of the Ombudsman yesterday recommended the filing of graft charges against 17 ranking DPWH officials for the alleged rigged bidding of a $33-million World Bank-funded road project.

The DPWH officials, which include former Secretary Florante Soriquez, current undersecretary Manuel Bonoan, and other officials involved in the bidding for Phase 1 of the National Roads Improvement and Management Program (NRMP-1), also face charges of grave misconduct, dishonesty and neglect of duty, among others.

Malacañang welcomed the Ombudsman's recommendation to file charges against the DPWH officials.

"It's encouraging to note that the Ombudsman has been able to come up with its findings and conclusions and actions on the controversy on the case within a relatively short time," Secretary Gabriel Claudio, presidential political adviser, told reporters in San Juan, Batangas.

WB report

The Ombudsman's Field Investigation Office recommended the filing of charges against Soriquez, who approved the results of the bidding; Bonoan, who was the chair of the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) for Visayas and Mindanao projects; BAC members and assistant secretaries Rabbi Barandon, Salvador Phylo, Mucamad Sahi-in Jr., Juanito Alberyo and Rafael Yalaor; project manager Al Emerson Bermoy; legal service officer-in-charge Jose Jacob and his successor Claude Peñarida; project director Baltazar Hernandez, Lope Adriano and Manny Bandolaria; Bureau of Research and Standards director Antonio Bidaya Jr.; Bureau of Construction director Felino Quiazon; and BAC members Florencio Arrieta and Leonora Dorotan.

The case stemmed from a WB report that uncovered a major cartel engaged in collusive practices in the bidding for the road project. It had banned three local and four Chinese contractors due to alleged corruption.

But the FIO cleared current DPWH Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane.

Assistant Ombudsman Mark Johnson said they found "no evidence to show that (Ebdane) committed any violations."

'Sweeping, unfair'

But Ebdane said the Ombudsman's decision "seemed sweeping and a bit unfair" and expressed confidence "the truth will prevail."

In a statement, Ebdane said the DPWH is "prepared to cooperate in any investigation of its personnel officials."

The FIO said it had found "an indication of collusion between and among the members of the DPWH Bids and Awards Committee (DPWH-BAC) and the bidders."

Johnson said they also found "patterns of behavior that appear to show collusion among private contractors." Johnson said they would coordinate with the National Bureau of Investigation to probe the private contractors. With reports from Tj Burgonio and Jerome Aning

Legacy owner, officers swap raps

By Norman Bordadora and Allison M. Lapuz

LEGACY OWNER EDGAR DE LOS SANTOS and two of his former officers, Carolina Handa and Nieomasia Nuñez-Santos, have exchanged allegations in affidavits on who actually controlled the operations of the failed Legacy Group.

De los Angeles, Handa and Santos filed their respective counter-affidavits yesterday in connection with the P107-million unauthorized trade charges brought against them and other Legacy executives by 32 private investors before the justice department.

Handa, former Legacy president and CEO, accused De los Angeles of squandering investors' money while Santos, former chief finance officer, said the Los Angeles official off-loaded massive amount of company funds from its personal accounts.

But in his counter-affidavit to the complaint filed by investor Francisco Olivarares and several others, De los Angeles claimed that all executive and financial decisions were made by Handa and Nuñez-Santos in his absence. He said "they had the freedom authority."

Totally dependent

"They could say yes or no to any person, officer or even (how) of the Legacy Group. I learned to them exclusively for any decisions involving the hiring, promotion or termination of any employee. I was totally dependent on them," he said.

Handa and Santos testified before the Senate committee on trade and commerce inquiry into the allegedly fraudulent activities of the Legacy Group on how De los Angeles treated the company funds as his own, eventually depleting them and how the allegedly fraudulent activities were committed.

De los Angeles denied that Legacy and its affiliated banks engaged in a financial scam known as the Ponzi scheme. He said his companies were formed not to commit fraud but to engage in legitimate business.

He said that he never gave instructions to his executives and staff to commit fraud, "to falsify any documents or information, or to otherwise take any unlawful measures either to meet their performance targets or to withdraw the Group's financial position."

Handa, in her counter-affidavit, said that while she was the CEO, it was De los Angeles who ran the group's day-to-day operations even when he was serving as mayor of Sto. Domingo, Albay.

She said she based on the records, De los Angeles received around P127 million in 2006, around P606 million in 2007 and around P500 million in 2008."

Mismanagement

Panelo-Santos said the Legacy group's business collapsed not just because of the depressed international business environment but because of the "mismanagement of the Legacy group by Mr. De los Angeles and the siphoning [off] of company funds by Mr. De los Angeles."

A de Makati prosecutor's office, meanwhile, on was overseas Filipino worker who lost P200,000 of his hard-earned money to the Legacy group, said De los Angeles was a "demon."

Arsenio Evangelista, 64, who worked as an overseas hotel manager in Palau, was the main complainant with Gilda Dutta, Arlene Baes, Jesha Calleja, Genaro Villon and Aurora Soriano in a syndicated estafa case initiated on their behalf yesterday by Sen. Manuel Roxas.

Roxas, who was given a special power of attorney by the six complainants, said Legaspi's victims all over the country likely reached "tens of thousands."

"We are filing this on behalf of all the victims of this scam. We will not be fooled and we will not allow them responsible to get away with this," said Roxas, who will be overseeing all the legal appeals.

WHAT WENT BEFORE

IN JANUARY THE WORLD BANK barred three Philippine and four Chinese construction firms from bidding on its projects because of alleged collusion with government officials to rig the bidding of contracts under Phase 1 of the National Roads Improvement and Management Program.

The World Bank also decided not to fund $33 million worth of contracts for the project.

The blacklisted Philippine firms are Cavite Ideal International Conservation and Development Corp., CM Pancho Construction Inc. (both banned for four years) and E.C. de Luna Construction Corp. (banned permanently).

The Chinese firms are China Road and Bridge Corp. (banned for eight years), China State Construction Corp., China Wu Yi Co. Ltd. (both barred for six years) and China Gezhouba Group Company Corp. (banned for five years).

In a Senate inquiry on Jan. 27, Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago said Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez should be impeached for her inaction on the World Bank case even though the financial institution had submitted a report on the alleged collusion as early as November 2007.

In the same inquiry, E.C. de Luna president Eduardo de Luna, under questioning by Sen. Pacifico Lacson, admitted to knowing Vice Ombudsman Jose Miguel Arroyo but clarified that he used the President's husband's name not clout.

On Feb. 4, Lacson said that based on excerpts of the World Bank report on the case, 18 people had implicated the First Gentleman, politicians including former Bulacan representative Prospero Pichay and former Negros Occidental Rep. Jacinto Ibarra, and public works officials in the purported bid rigging.

According to the report, a contractor could secure a "winning commercial" before the bidding materializes, in exchange for 12 to 20 percent of the contract. The winning bidder would also give one to three percent of the contract value to losing bidders, and two to three percent to government officials.

Santiago said her copy of the World Bank report did not mention any controversy against Arroyo.

On Feb. 24, the World Bank refused to authenticate excerpts of the report presented by Lacson on media, saying these were strictly confidential. Cynthia Rosenbrock, its spokesperson.

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BLAIR COMPUTER LAB
FORMER British Prime Minister Tony Blair holds the plaque that will be installed on the computer lab that PLDT, Smart and the PLDT-Smart Foundation will set up in his name at the Philippine Christian Foundation (PCF) school in Tanay's infamous Sumilao Mountain. With him are (from left) Smart Public Affairs Group head Ramon R. Isberto; PLDT-Smart Foundation president Napoleon L. Nazareno; PLDT chairman Manuel V. Pangilinan; Smart chief wireless adviser Orlando B. Vea; JD Buckingham, wife of British Ambassador Peter Buckingham and PCF chief executive officer Jane Walker.

No body, no murder, Ping's lawyer says

By DJ Yap

THE LAWYERS OF SEN. PANFILO LACSON are claiming that the skeletal remains earlier identified as those of slain publicists Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbito most likely belonged to a comedian because of the frilly sweats in which they were found.

"From what we gathered, it was really a comedian," lawyer Alex Avisado told the Pressmeet media forum at the Club Filipino in San Juan.

Avisado, and another Lacson lawyer Jimmy Antonio said they based the comedian hypothesis on "unofficial reports" on the ground as well as the "geographical locations" where the human bones were discovered.

Avisado earlier claimed that the bones could be those of cattle citing the findings of the University of the Philippines National Institutes Biomedical Institute that there was no trace of human DNA on the charred remains.

No corpus delicti

But he admitted that the UP report also did not indicate any traces of animal DNA in the skeletal remains.

"The NBI will not categorically say whether there was animal DNA found or not. They will just indicate if there were traces of human (DNA found)," he said.

Based on the NBI findings, Avisado claimed that there was no corpus delicti (body of the crime), or the object upon which a crime has been committed that serves as evidence proving that the crime was committed.

Hence, Lacson's lawyer argued, there was no murder, unless the prosecution can prove that the skeletal remains were really those of Dacer and Corbito.

The lawyers also questioned the timing of the filing of amendatory charges against former Lacson aides Glenn Dumlao and Senior Supt. Cesar Mancao.

"They knew Mancao and Dumlao were already involved since 2003, so why are they pursuing it only in 2009?" Avisado said.

"They current blame on the supporting three of using this case for political purposes," Avisado said.

Lacson, a prospective presidential candidate in 2010, and deposed President Joseph Estrada were implicated in the double murder by ex-police officer Cesar Mancao in a Feb. 14, 2009 affidavit that he executed in the United States where he is now awaiting extradition. Mancao claimed to have overheard Lacson telling another police officer, Michael Ray Aquino, to liquidate Dacer.

Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile yesterday said a purported text message from Mancao to Lacson more than a year ago can be used in court to cross-examine Mancao and pin him down on his claim implicating Lacson in the double murder.

'Sleep soundly, sir'

"Unfaithful cross-examiner could make life very difficult for [Mancao] to explain his exile," said Enrile.

Lacson released a text message that Mancao, a former aide, supposedly sent him on Jan.4, 2008, assuring Lacson of his loyalty.

"I will (keep your) temptation. Sleep soundly, sir," Mancao is said to have texted from Florida where he had fled.

Lacson claimed Mancao sent the message following a phone conversation during which Mancao allegedly told him that Gen. Romeo Pesumo, the intelligence chief, had offered to eliminate him or resettle his family in Singapore in exchange for implicating Lacson in the double murder case.

Enrile said Lacson's lawyers could ask Mancao on cross-examination to explain his text message.

"Why did you send them texts? What is the purpose? Are you assuring him that you know something against him and that you will not reveal or you assuring him that you know nothing and that you will not (disclose)?" Enrile said. With Christine Avendaño

Workers group wants Lebanon OFW ban to stay

By Jerome Aning

AN OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS' group in the Middle East has called on the Philippine government not to lift the deployment ban to Lebanon just yet, saying the Eastern Mediterranean country was still an unsafe destination for workers as well as for workers.

Citing the Monday attack on Palestinian Liberation Organization deputy representative in Lebanon Kamal Staji, Migrante-Middle East said that as long as anti-Israel groups remain in that country, it remained in danger of being attacked or invaded by Israel, with everyone at risk.

"Lebanon is still a country at war with its neighboring terrorist state, Israel. War could spark anytime, threatening the country's security and stability," said Migrante-ME's regional coordinator John Leonard Monterona in a statement sent to Inquirer.

Staji, a close aide of the late PLO chief Yasser Arafat, was killed in a bombing incident outside a refugee camp in southern Lebanon. He was the PLO's deputy representative to Lebanon and also a former intelligence chief for the mainstream Fatah movement.

Monterona, who at based in Saudi Arabia, cited media reports about speculations among power advocates in Lebanon that the assassination could revive the war between Lebanon and Israel. Many have accused Israel as behind the killing.

The OFW leader also cited recent redeployments in southern Israel that originated in Lebanon, to which the Israeli military often responded with artillery barrages.

He also criticized Vice President Noli de Castro, also presidential adviser for OFWs, who had agreed to discuss the lifting of the ban in Lebanon, "in the expense of OFWs' lives, their safety and security."

"Migrante maintains that the primordial considerations to sending our people to work abroad are their safety and security, as well as the protection of their labor rights and welfare, including the provision of humane, safe living and working conditions, and decent pay and other labor rights as guaranteed by the international labor standards," Monterona said.

A Malacañang statement, however, quoted Labor Secretary Marianito Roque as saying that the three-year ban had yet to be lifted since the Philippines is still evaluating measures to labor standards on a bilateral level with Lebanon's Ministry of Labor.

There are over 28,000 documented Filipinos workers in Lebanon, 90 percent of them working in the households of Maronite Christians in Northern Beirut.

PRESS FREEDOM REPORT

2008 a bad year for RP journalists

By Nikko Dizon

THE NUMBER OF FILIPINO JOURNALISTS killed rose to six in 2008, making the year one of the worst since President Macapagal-Arroyo began her term in 2001, the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility (CMFR) said in its Philippine Press Freedom Report 2008, released yesterday.

Press freedom again took a beating in 2008 as the number of journalists killed in the line of duty rose of the most telling indicators of threats to press freedom, now to six from two recorded since in 2007," the CMFR said.

Murdered last year were journalists Alejandro Mafalac, Francis Alfredo "Bert" Bosos, Martin Nuñez, Dennis Cuesta, Leodegario Ganzon, and Leo Lastimosa. All of whom were based in their provinces.

The victims were believed to have been killed because of their critical commentaries on issues, such as corruption, in their respective hometowns.

The Philippines' ranking in press freedom surveys may likely remain with the six murders following a year of relative calm. Only two work-related killings took place in 2007.

Even the Paris-based Reporters Without Borders noted the "unexpected improvement" of the Philippine situation in the country rose 14 places higher in its 2009 press freedom index.

The CMFR pointed out that the pervading presence of "elements that breed impunity" continue to cost journalists their lives.

The CMFR identified three elements as the lack of political will, poor law enforcement, and an ineffective judicial system.

Government indifference

The CMFR pointed out that except in 2007, the number of killings were 10&#93 less or more from the 70.

"There are now 89 journalists killed in the line of duty during the Arroyo administration—more than half of the 77 killed since 1986," the CMFR said.

Aside from the government's indifference to the "developments and hostile environment in which journalists work," the CMFR pointed to government critics that also "helped erode press freedom."

Among those were the controversial directive of Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Director Dulnuth Jesus Verzosa that limited the media's access to police blotter reports.

The Verzosa directive was heavily criticized, forcing the PNP chief to withdraw the order.

The government also considered filing a complaint against ABS-CBN Channel 2 after it aired an exclusive interview with Abdullah Macapaar, the rogue commander of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said the interviews could be violative of a provision in the RBC Diplomatic ng mga Broadcaster ng Pilipinas Broadcast Code of 2007 which states that "criminals shall not be glorified" and "crimes should always be condemned."

The CMFR also noted the reported "media profiling" of the military's Western Mindanao Command wherein the journalists were made to fill out forms with information such as the Social Security number and distinguishing physical marks, before they are accredited to cover the camp.

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Abu threat called a bluff

JAMBOANGA CITY—THE ABU Sayyaf's threat to behead one of the three kidnapped workers of the International Committee of the Red Cross was just a "gimmick," a source involved in the ground operation said yesterday.

They issued the threat to buy time and negotiate for a ransom, said the source, one of the troops raised militia leaders in Sulu.

"They're only after money. They want instant money, they will not hurt their hostages, unless of course they are weakened, killed off and left with no other choice," the source said.

General Dinampo, a Silimanian from University professor said a former Abu Sayyaf hostage victim herself, gave the same assessment.

Although the Abu Sayyaf is quite capable of executing the hostages, Dinampo said the threat by Abu Sayyaf leader Albader Parad to behead one of the hostages if the military pursuing the gang does not pull out was a "diversionary action" because Parad and his group no longer hold custody of the three ICRC personnel.

Dinampo, who is on a fellowship at the American University in Washington, D.C., said he has kept track of the three-month old ICRC kidnapping crisis in Sulu.

The three ICRC workers—Swiss national Andreas Notter, Italian Eugenio Vagni and Filipino Mary Jean Lasalin—were abducted by the Abu Sayyaf in Jolo on Jan. 15.

"Peace negotiators are already split up between Doctor Abu and Radullan Sahiron's team," Dinampo said.

Ismael Buyat, Adanis Ian Kanlin, the Sulu police chief, said he received reports of Parad's threat 10 days ago but it has not been validated.

"We commend the ICRC that so far it's a bluff, but we are dealing with all information as true for the sake of three kidnap victims," he said.

The military yesterday said it would maintain its presence around the Parad group despite the threat to behead one of the hostages, but not so close as to jeopardize negotiations.

"We have to be as prudent as we can so as to ease the pressure, but not too near as to trigger confrontation," said Armed Forces Chief of Staff Alexander Yano.

"We have not closed in, we haven't encroached, we have not done any offensive action as yet because we feel that we have to explore all possibilities to rescue or recover the hostages," he said. *Julie Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao, and Tarra Quismundo*

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The Daily Gospel

Thursday, March 26, 2009
4th Week of Lent

1st Reading: Ex 32:7-14
Gospel: Jn 5:31-47

Jesus said to the Jews, "If I bear witness to myself, my testimony would be worthless. But another One is bearing witness to me, and I know that the testimony he is bear witness to me. John also bore witness to the truth when you sent messengers to him, but I do not seek such human testimony; I recall this for you, so that you may be saved.

"He was a burning and shining lamp, and for a while you were willing to enjoy his light. But I have greater witness than that of John: the works which the Father entrusted to me to carry out. The very works I do bear witness for the Father has sent me. The he who sent me has borne witness to me is the Father who sent me. You have never heard his voice nor have you seen his likeness, then, as long as you do not believe his messenger, his words are not in you.

"You search in the Scriptures thinking that in them you will find life; yet Scripture bears witness to me. But you refuse to come to me to have life. I do not look for praise from men, but I have known that love of God is not within you. For I have come in my Father's name and you do not accept me. If another should come in his own name, you will accept him. So long as you seek praise from one another instead of seeking the glory coming from the only God, how can you believe?

"Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father. Moses himself in whom you placed your hope, accuses you. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe what he wrote, how will you believe what I say?"

Commentary

Jesus was not only ever saddened by unbelief and unfaithfulness, neglect of him and his doctrine. Those who slighted and misunderstood him, did so because they admired and even imitated themselves. Jesus opposed their lack of love for God, that for us poor souls, there is life in the eyes of God. Many, who make a real profession of religion, show that they are looking to love for God by their neglect and contempt of his commandments. How can anyone say they believe in God, when they make the praise and applause of the world their chief? It is only when we display pure love and compassion that we are sure of being called Children. If it was love for God, that Christ, and to love to our brethren, which is our life.

More subsidies eyed for poorest of the poor

By Christian V. Esguerra

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO PLANS to hand out more subsidies for food and transportation for the poorest Filipinos as government struggles to keep the country insulated from the global financial turmoil.

"The government needs to continue with the targeted subsidies for the poorest among us," she said, specifying subsidies for food, gasoline for transport and for rice.

The fresh subsidies will be funded mainly from the P1.415 trillion 2009 budget, with additional sums to be provided by government financial institutions, said Economic Planning Secretary Ralph Recto.

Subsidies, both direct and indirect, are a key component of government's strategy to minimize the effects of the global financial crisis on the economy.

These include the P10-billion voluntary cash transfer program targeted at 320,000 poor households and one million school children in the 20 poorest provinces.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development is also handing out a P500 electricity subsidy for every "lifeline" user, or those consuming 100 kilowatt hours of electricity or less a month.

Private companies like the Pilipinas Shell oil company are also pitching in.

The firm offers a P1 discount for every liter of fuel pedal bought by tricycle drivers.

The government has also given some 1,000 relatives of tricycle-driven Philippine Health Insurance (Philhealth) cards worth P1,200 each.

Hand in hand with the guess of more subsidies to the poorest Filipinos, Ms Arroyo called for the government bureaucracy to implement more cost-cutting measures.

QUICKSTOP goes to Biñan, Laguna

Another successful store opening of QuickStop Convenience Store, Inc.

Quit Pagcor, solon asks 'Kuya Efren'

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

A CALOOCAN CITY CONGRESSWOMAN wants "Kuya Efren" to resign from the country's casino monopoly if he wants to run for senator next year.

Rep. Hilary Hilal L. Cajayon was referring to Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. Chair Ephraim Genuino who, she claimed, "unabashedly" used his office and the gambling drive it has been promoting, Iloilo (Bayang Iloilo sa Diyos), as a campaign vehicle to boost his stock way ahead of the 2010 elections.

"We are both administration allies, but what Genuino accepts is if Genuino used Pagcor money to further his political ambitions. It's alright to pursue one's dream, but he should use his own funds. He should resign out of dedication," said Cajayon in an interview.

Cajayon said she was appalled when she watched a parade along Roxas Boulevard in Manila made up of motorists sporting T-shirts with Genuino's face and the words "Kuya Efren" emblazoned on them. "The students don't even know who Kuya Efren is. If it was indeed an assisting rally then why was Genuino's face and name plastered all over the event site?" said Cajayon.

She also said Genuino reportedly offered free rides on the Light Rail Way Transit system to students on March 25. "Where is he getting all his money?" asked Cajayon.

The congresswoman said a number of her constituents had complained to her about how hard it was to ask help from Pagcor for their medical needs. "They said Pagcor used to be generous, but now, it appears to be short of cash," she added.

Iloilo was launched in 2005 by the President with Dick Gordon, the ex-Senator's son, handling the promotion, marketing and promotion of media vehicles for the program.

Pagcor vice president for Corporate Communications Dodie King, however, said Pagcor did not spend for the parade as food, transportation, shirts and other expenses were "donations." Since the event was a "small-agency endorser," the free rides were courtesy of the transportation department, he added. With Erika Sauler

GMA open to tax on text

SAN JUAN, MANDAUE—PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said she would be open to a congressional proposal to impose a five-centavo fee for text messages and mobile phone calls.

In a chat a life with Mandaueños reporters here, the President initially expressed some reservations about the proposal from Quezon Rep. Danilo Suarez.

"Remember we brought down already the price of text by 30 centavos, so why increase it again by five centavos or 10 centavos?" she asked.

But she said she would be open to the proposal on two conditions.

First, she said that if the proposal were to push through, the fee should be "less than what it never down by" before.

"We're not talking centavos about one peso," she said.

Second, she said collections from the additional fee on text messages and mobile phone calls should be "earmarked for capital expenditures."

"Education is very appropriate," she said.

The initial proposal was to impose a fee of 10 centavos but the House oversight committee reduced it to five centavos.

Suarez said the revenues from the new fee would be enough to finance the construction of computer centers for public elementary and high schools with a population of at least 500 students. Christian V. Esguerra

GMA behind Cha-cha, says De Venecia

From page A1

De Venecia told reporters.

"I wanted down the request for me to help because they are not telling the Filipino people the truth," he said, pointing to the ultimate motive of Cox-ass—"so that Gloria's term can be extended."

De Venecia said in lying so administration allies could muster the 187 votes in the House and get the Supreme Court to uphold their moves. "Above will be no stopping Cha-cha."

Villaraz denied De Venecia's allegation, "I never offered him the speakership," he told the Inquirer. "What will I offer him? He's the one who volunteered to help."

"All these people crucifying this resolution must have first the decency to read the resolution. It hasn't even been filed yet," Villaraz said, adding that the measure neither calls for recalling next year's balloting nor extending the term of existing elective officials.

Maintaining also scoffed at claims that the administration was bent on amending the Constitution ahead of the 2010 elections in panic the ouster as a parliamentary form of government.

Secretary Gabriel Claudio, presidential political adviser, said that Malacañang, which approved the P11.3 billion budget for poll automation on Monday, was all psyched up for the May 2010 elections.

Palace on election mode

Claudio said the Commission on Elections had gone "full blast" preparing for the first nationwide computerized elections, even as the administration mobilizes "its political machinery to extract..."

NOGRALES: "Decoy" resolution

ARROYO: He volunteered for help.

DE VENECIA: I said no.

"The whole economy the administration included, is on standstill mode," he said.

"I can find that they still need 20 votes to obtain the required 187 votes," De Venecia said, referring to the magic number which represents three-fourths of the combined Senate and House membership to effect any changes in the 1987 Constitution.

Economist Jun Bug, Luis Villafuerte has said the House could push through Cox-ass despite the Senate's strong objection if it could get 197 signatures.

Villafuerte disputes the contention that the Constitution provides a two-thirds vote of members of the House and the Senate, voting separately, was needed to call a Con-ass.

Hopeless proposition

De Venecia stressed that even the separate Cha-cha resolution filed by Speaker Prospero Nograles was only a "decoy" pointing out that limiting amendments to purely economic provisions was a "hopeless" proposition.

"The Nograles resolution is just a decoy and the Villafuerte resolution does not say anything, except to get the Supreme Court to rule it can adopt as a constituent assembly," De Venecia said.

Afraid of plunder cases

"They will beg her (Ms Arroyo) immunity. They are afraid of the plunder cases on her filed against them. If the Cha-cha move has to go signed from the Presidents, will they get 197 votes?" De Venecia said.

He was referring to reported Palace efforts to keep Ms Arroyo as transition president or prime minister if the move to abolish the presidential system in power the way for parliamentary or federal system pushes through.

As of February 100 congressmen had signed the Con-ass resolution, other Congress sources said.

Should the Con-ass bid succeed, De Venecia said Congress could then push for a transition period that would extend the terms of all elected officials by one or two years after 2010 to allow the Con-ass to revise the Constitution.

Senators Aloy Peter Cayetano and Francis Pangilinan called on Ms Arroyo to break her silence on Con-ass. They said her unclear position was only fueling rumors that she really wanted to stay on as President beyond June 30, 2010.

Cayetano said that after years of "underhanded wrong-arm rule, many still can't believe that she will simply leave in 2010 without a Plan A and Cha-cha."

Cha-cha is Plan A

"Everyone knows that Cha-cha is Plan A, temporary rule is Plan B and resignation for a caretaker or an opposition victory home is Plan C," Cayetano said.

"They are playing with fire and making a costly mistake if they think they can ram Cha-cha down the throats of people already sick and tired of almost daily corruption in government," Pangilinan said.

He said administration officials were afraid they would lose their immunity after the 2010 elections and face "a string of nonbailable plunder cases and jail."

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Q. Pimentel Jr. said that the self-and-on move of Malacañang and its allies to revive Cha-cha was an exercise in futility "because the means with which they are pushing for it is unconstitutional."

No time left

Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile said there was no time for Cha-cha.

"It's difficult to go through that. We don't even know how it will be done. They are quarreling in the House if it will be treated like an ordinary bill or it will be separately done," Enrile said in an interview.

Even if Cha-cha proponents get the required number, it will have tough sailing, he said.

"If they will disregard the Senate, it will have to go to the Supreme Court. They have to remember that we're a bicameral Congress. The House of Representatives is not the Congress of the Philippines, neither is the Senate," Enrile said.

"Not my guess as a lawyer ... they will lose if they will do it alone. The Supreme Court cannot alter the issue. Once you set up-Senate court, you can only be ladden to your countenance, in God and in history," Enrile stressed.

Plebiscite needs funding

The Senate president said that funding a plebiscite to ratify the new Constitution also needed the support of the Senate because it would entail appropriation.

"If the plan is to bypass the Senate, then I will be the first to challenge it before the Supreme Court," said Sen. Francis Escudero, who is the chair of the Senate committee on constitutional amendments and revision of laws.

"If by any chance it passes the House of Representatives, I am sure that the people will reject it," Escudero added.

Bukidnon Rep. Teofisto Guingona III said that Ms Arroyo should come clean on the Con-ass by asking her son to withdraw his support from the draft resolution to parry charges of "selfishness" behind the move and not.

"If they have the changeah to assume that they can violate the rules of the House, our laws and the Constitution so they can push for Con-ass, then they should at least have the guts to come out," Bukidnon Rep. Teofisto Guingona III said.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, president of the United Opposition, said Ms Arroyo's failure to make a categorical statement that she would step aside in 2010 means she was reckoning Cha-cha.

"Ms Arroyo is feeding their optimism by not publicly disowning any plan to stay in power beyond 2010," he said.

GMA's own unfixed

But the President's allies denied this.

"The House is mandated to act and decide on any Cha-cha proposal after it has been filed. The Palace has nothing to do with our action or decision on any Cha-cha proposal," said House Deputy Speaker Simeon Kimbayan Jr. With reports from Lydia B. Saliouwen, TJ Burgonio and Allison M. Lopez

4 out of 10 Filipinos don't favor Cha-cha

From page A1

percentage point decrease in support for it (from 39 percent in 2006 to 10 percent in 2009), matched by the same increase in public indecision (from 19 percent in 2006 to 28 percent in 2009).

Of the total respondents, some 8 in six (18.197 percent) said they attend having little knowledge of the Constitution; 25 percent said they know enough; 16 percent reported having almost or completely no knowledge at all, and 3 percent had "a great deal of knowledge."

Even so, those against constitutional amendments now were found across all geographic areas and socioeconomic groupings (42 percent to 91 percent).

Exceptions were Mindanao, where only 26 percent were not in favor and undecideds were predominant (40 percent), and Class E—the very poor—, where almost the same percentages were either against or supportive of Charter change (46 percent "not in favor" versus 37 percent "in favor").

Improved economy

Of those in favor of Charter change (10 percent), 36.3 percent said that amending the Constitution would help improve the economy, 20.7 percent said it would help eradicate corruption and 11.9 percent said it would help improve the law.

The respondents were asked an open-ended question: What is the most important reason why you do not favor the proposed Constitution? This time, the respondents were not given choices and gave the reasons themselves.

Those who do not favor changing the Constitution now (442 percent) were also asked an open-ended question: What is the reason of them and that they were against changing the Constitution now "to avoid chaos."

Some 16.4 percent believed the present Constitution was good enough, and 11.3 percent did not want to extend the term to either of officials.

Some 10.8 percent of the respondents were more specific— they said they were against changes in the Charter to prevent extending the term of office of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Con-con preferred

Asked about the preferred mode of changing the Charter, 49 percent said a constitutional convention (Con-con) was best, while 31 percent said a consistent assembly was more desirable.

Overwhelming majorities opposed specific proposed changes or amendments in the Constitution.

Seventy-seven percent were against allowing elected officials to run to the elections as many times as possible, 82 percent were against term extension for national and local elective officials and 69 percent were against allowing foreigners and foreign corporations to own lands in the Philippines.

Fifty-nine percent of respondents were not in favor of changing the present presidential system into a parliamentary system, an increase of five percentage points from March 2006. Support for a parliamentary system dropped 12 percentage points (from 33 percent to 21 percent), while indecision increased 7 percentage points (from 11 percent to 20 percent).

Presidential system

The same percentage (59 percent) was found to be against changing the present system of government from a federal system of government, an increase of four percentage points from 2006.

The results this year reflected a decrease of 10 percentage points for those in favor of a federal form of government (from 22 percent in 2006 to 12 percent), and an increase of 6 percentage points among the undecided (from 13 percent to 19 percent).

The survey was conducted using face-to-face interviews with 1,200 adults in Metro Manila, the rest of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, to lend a margin of error of plus-minus 3 percent. Ellen Victoria, Inquirer Research

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
KALOOKAN NG CITY DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
DepEd

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

Republic of the Philippines

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Fil-Am couple plead guilty in labor case

LOS ANGELES—A WOMAN SUSPECTED of paying someone to smuggle Filipinos on the US Iloco finding them to work in her nursing homes has pleaded guilty to a forced labor charge in a deal with federal prosecutors.

The US Attorney's office said Tuesday that 52-year-old Evelyn Pelayo of Long Beach has pleaded guilty to forced labor and unlawful conduct with respect to documents.

Prosecutors say she admitted paying a co-defendant $12,000 to smuggle in two people.

Prosecutors say she took passports and threatened to report the victims to authorities if they tried to escape.

Pelayo's husband, Darwin Dalcidio, pleaded guilty to harboring and concealing a third illegal immigrant for financial gain.

Globe

NOTICE OF REGULAR ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the regular annual stockholders' meeting of GLOBE TELECOM INC. will be held at the Grand Ballroom, Rizal Intercontinental Manila, Ayala Triangle, Makati City on THURSDAY, 23 APRIL 2009 at 9:00 A.M. with the following:

AGENDA

1. Determination of Quorum
2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting
3. Annual Report of Officers
4. New Business
   (...) Ratification of all acts and Resolutions of the Board of Directors and Management adopted in the ordinary course of business during the preceding year
5. Election of Directors including the Independent Directors
6. Election of Auditors and Fixing their Remuneration
7. Consideration of such other business as may properly come before the meeting
8. Adjournment

Stockholders of record as of 16 February 2009 shall be the stockholders entitled to vote at this meeting. As per By-Laws, the Stock and Transfer Books of the Corporation will be closed from 04 February 2009 to 03 March 2009 and 24 March to 03 April 2009, inclusive.

Manila, Philippines, January 26, 2009

FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ATTY. LYNDON G. MORALES
Corporate Secretary

2009 reasons to enjoy Singapore

Reason No. 1851

Kids Stay Free!

Third Person Stays Free!

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Go to Singapore on your favorite airline with your favorite travel pals, and your kids or friends stay free!

Free Malacca Tour for third person! *

Kids stay for free if you book your land package from March 20 - May 30, 2009 and travel from April 1 - May 31, 2009.

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Enjoy the power of three, third person stays free. Contact your travel agent for more details.

Terms & Conditions: - Up to a maximum of 2 kids for Kids-Stay-Free Promo - For thrift promos, applicable to selected hotels as follows: M Hotel, Orchard Hotel, Copthorne Orchid, Copthorne Kings Hotel, Miramar Hotel, Riverview Hotel, Grand Copthorne Waterfront, and Sheraton Hotel - For bookings on hotels other than the selected hotels, child/third person will be given free city + Tiger Line Tour - Offer not transferable or convertible to cash - Other terms & conditions apply

* For every 2 adults booked for Malacca Tours

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- $$$ worth of Charles and Keith vouchers for every single receipt purchase of at least $$$$
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Call Singapore Tourism Board Philippines at 555 555 5555 for details.

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UNIQUELY Singapore

2 Alabang kids snatched; ₱1.5-M ransom paid

By [illegible] A.

ing at the Boracay Island and the other at the British School of Manila, both located in Taguig City—were released on Tuesday afternoon.

Police sources said the brothers were abducted by armed men while they were on their way to school yesterday at 8:17 a.m. or Thursday from their residence in Ayala Alabang Village in Muntinlupa City.

The kidnappers were said to have originally demanded ransom of $2 million in the belief that the parents, both currency traders, could afford it.

Pure Filipinos

Ang-See said the kidnappers eventually settled for ₱1.5 million, after the parents swore that the amount was all the money they could raise in cash or by check.

"The parents tried talking out a bank loan, but practically all their money had gone to the construction of a big house, and the kidnappers wanted cash quick," Ang-See said.

She said she was not able to talk to the family, but added that the brothers were pure Filipinos and not Chinese-Filipinos...the usual targets of kidnappings for ransom syndicates.

The family did not report the kidnapping to the Police Anti-Crime Emergency Response (Peace) or the Philippine National Police's special anti-kidnapping unit, and personally handled the negotiation for the boys' release, police sources said.

P24M in 3 months

According to information gathered by the CAACC, there were 17 kidnap victims in January, 20 in February and 12 in March, including the two brothers.

All of the victims were released after payment of ransom, said the CAACC statement more than P24 million paid to various crime syndicates in the last three months.

"We are really very bothered that there's a sudden escalation of kidnapping incidents in the

ANG-SEE: Today's style is fast and quick ransom payment.

first quarter of this year. In the last nine years, there was never, it was quiet. Now the kidnappers are hungry," Ang-See lamented.

She said there was not a single kidnapping case in the last two years, particularly because of the Chinese-Filipino community's vigilance and the Anti-Kidnapping Law and dialogue with them.

But according to the Peace chief, Senior Supt. Leonardo Espina, only four kidnapping for ransom cases had been reported since January.

Twelve such cases were reported to Peace last year, Espina said. The figure excludes terrorism-related abduction cases in Mindanao, which the PNP accounts for separately, he said.

"I can say that the situation in the first quarter of 2009 is pretty much the same in 2008 in terms of the duration on kidnapping for ransom syndicates ... There are only a few groups now," Espina said.

Of the four cases, one has been solved. Peace is building up cases against the suspects tagged in the three other incidents and has recommended "vote-to-detain" with territorial police units where these cases happened, he said.

Different style

Ang-See said the current modus operandi runs in total contrast to the style of the 1990s, when parents would wait for days and refuse them for any amount offered by their kidnappers.

"Now the kidnappers' style is different—fast... no protracted negotiation, quick payment of ransom," she said.

The ransom demand is initially high but the actual amount paid ranges from P800,000 or P900,000 to P1 million, Ang-See said.

She observed that among the kidnapping cases in Metro Manila and Luzon, the ransom paid for the two brothers released on Tuesday was the highest.

"Times are hard. The families of kidnap victims can no longer afford to meet big ransom demands," she said.

Espina made a similar remark, saying the kidnapping trend had developed into cheaper-is-fast, quick-money abduction schemes pulled off by maids or even gang members holding children and demanding a release fee of as low as P1,000.

"That's what is increasing the figures. There are many cases not perpetrated by syndicates but by maids, relatives, friends and the like out to make money from their friends or relatives," he said.

Ang-See said that with the similar modus operandi in the cases mentioned by the CAACC, the kidnapping could have been pulled off by just one group.

Admit the problem

She said she was not discounting the possibility that this group was being protected by certain police or military personnel, whether active or retired.

Citing earlier arrests made by Peace, Ang-See said former police and military officers were behind kidnapping-for-ransom activities. She said that to stop such acts, an active campaign of the PNP Special Action Force was among those ordered.

But Ang-See expressed confidence in the capability of PNP Director General Jesus Verzosa and Peace to identify and arrest the groups behind the sudden escalation of kidnappings, especially the two Alabang cases.

She said stamping out kidnapping for ransom should start with the first step—"to admit that there is a problem." With a report from Nestra Quinsaat-Ando

Palace backs Erap probe over toy gun; use common sense, says Enrile

By [illegible] A.

children playing with my guns" if they were really that serious about charging the two opposition leaders.

"What made them think they are above the law (just) because they are opposition leaders?" Press Secretary Cerge Remonde said in an interview by the government-owned Radyo ng Bayan.

Enrile said the police "overreacted" and warned that it would be a "laughingstock" if it "will charge a person for displaying a senseless mockfire gun on a prop that they even panned in the scene."

"You know when you are enforcing the law, you have to use common sense," Enrile told reporters in the Senate.

Another senator wondered on the ban being made by the police over the choice of transport used by the rivals and Estrada during a tour of Cainta town in Metro early this month.

"It's a big joke," Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said yesterday of the PNP investigations. A replica machine gun, he said, "cannot shoot like Cory Cojuangco."

On Tuesday, PNP Director General Jesus Verzosa ordered the Civil Security Group (CSG) to "dig deeper" into the circumstances surrounding the use of the jeep with the replica machine gun so that would be a violation of Comelec Resolution 6984, issued by then President Ferdinand Marcos in July 1985.

The law penalizes the sale, use and display of gun replicas.

'Overreacted'

The contrasting statements from the PNP headquarters in Camp Crame indicated that Estrada and Binay may well be on the clear for the jeep ride.

"As far as we're concerned, we are only investigating the legality of the firearms. The investigation does not involve persons," said Chief Supt. Bruno Bacoled, CSG head.

Asked about the two politicians' possible liability, Bacoled said: "As of this time? I don't think so. The ride was just offered to them."

But Bacoled said Estrada and Binay were prosecutable to the last step "should evidence" why they were visiting Cebu, or any place for that matter, riding what seems to be an armed personnel carrier displaying a 50-caliber machine gun."

"That is what they need to explain to the people. The PNP is not going to do the investigating the matter," he said.

Cebu swing

Estrada and Binay were in Cebu for the former president's "Lakbay Pasasalamat," a campaigning swing across several towns which observers noted have the trimmings of a political campaign.

Yesterday, Estrada explained that the jeep ride in Cainta "was just for photo op." He said Camsur Mayor Jesse Poe "was showing us the gun collection, I sat down on the jeep and even tried on a helmet."

'It must be the heat'

"It was an unintended machine gun," he maintained.

Referring to Remonde's remarks, Binay said that "it must be the heat. The people in Manila, nothing are suffering from anemia nor stroke."

Deposed in January 2001 and later sentenced to life imprisonment for plunder, Estrada was pardoned in 2007 by President Macapagal-Arroyo. Binay has been linked to alleged irregularities in the Makati City government.

Binay has also declared his plan to seek the presidency.

Laughingstock

Pimentel said that if the police were serious about investigating Estrada and Binay, then it was a "form of harassment."

Both said police officials were apparently out to impress the higher-ups by the fast they were cracking on the matter.

"My advice to (the police) is don't make a big thing out of this," he said. "If I were the secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government, I'll tell them hey stop that ... you will be the laughingstock of the entire nation."

Nonresident law?

Enrile, who served as defense secretary during the Marcos regime, said the 3:10 was a "useful law order" that no longer is used. It was made because during the martial law days, some were in the free time being sent to ask people, he said.

He stressed that the two opposition leaders were not committing any crime. "If you carried (Erap and Binay Sons) about all the children playing with toy guns?" he said.

Confiscation

In Cebu, Senior Supt. Carmelo Salmorin, police provincial director, said he had sent two officers to Carmen Mayor Poe's house on March 18 to subpoena her for issuing a replica of machine gun video used for Estrada's campaign. The latter carries a maximum punishment of confiscation.

Salmorin said Poe readily turned over the replica machine gun, which was kept in the custody of the Carmen police.

But Poe questioned the reason behind the seizure. "In my opinion, it's more of a political issue because of Erap. It's a public knowledge. He all knows that he is in the opposition," she said.

Valmoria, however, denied the mayor's claims. He said he learned about the replica machine gun only after the pictures of Estrada holding the prop appeared in the papers, and informed Camp Crame about it.

Car show

Poe said her husband Orlito acquired the military jeep in the 1990s when he was still a bachelor. When he passed away three years ago, the family decided to restore the vehicle with its accessories, including the replica machine gun worth ₱100,000, which they joined a car show in 2007 at the Cebu International Convention Center.

"As far as we are concerned, what we're after is the firearms aspect, the legality of the replica," Bacoled said. With reports from Tetch Quinsaat-Ando and Alimar B. Lopez in Manila, and Maureen Kristine Rapacon, Inquirer Visayas

Gov't told: Let drivers be; let them wear 'tsinelas'

By [illegible] A.

The transport leaders called on the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) to defer the implementation of certain provisions of an order increasing the fines and penalties for setting motorists while the affected parties resisted them.

Some of the provisions they complained about penalizes the wearing of slipper by drivers, which was listed among the reckless driving violations.

Excessive

Drivers and PUV operators said many of the fines under DOTC Order No. 2008-19, which was issued last year were excessive.

The drivers and transport operators also claimed that there was no consultation done before the order was approved.

DOTC officials disputed the drivers and operators, saying numerous public hearings were conducted on the imposition of fines in the previous years.

Informal hearing

At an "informal hearing" yesterday called by Bayanihan Rep. Marcelo Puentevella, chair of the House transportation committee, the transport group heads also complained about the imposition of penalties on PUV drivers caught wearing slippers while on the road.

Eduardo Marasan, president of the Federation of Jeepney Operators and Drivers Associations of the Philippines, said drivers should not get punished for wearing slippers.

"Drivers cannot afford to buy shoes. Besides, they would only get blisters if they use shoes while driving jeepneys," Marasan said yesterday.

Under the DOTC order, public utility drivers would be fined P1,000 for the first offense. For the second offense, they would be fined P1,500 and their license suspended for two months; for the third offense, there is a P2,000 fine and a six-month suspension of license.

The fourth offense would get their franchise revoked.

Puentevella said the concern of Marasan over the use of slippers was not unreasonable. "Maybe it's not reckless to use slippers," he said.

Increase in fees

The transport group leaders also protested the increase in the fees.

Efren de Luna of the Alliance of Concerned Transport Operators said that if there were any increase in the fines, it should only be around 25 percent, not 200 percent.

But Dante Jacobo, Traffic Safety Division chief of the Land Transportation Office, defended the DOTC order, saying that the fines were not excessive.

He said the monetary penalties for reckless driving were small compared with the loss of lives and damage to property.

No violation, no fine

She said the fines were meant to regulate motorists. "If drivers don't violate, they don't pay the fine," Jacobo said.

She also pointed out that the public hearings were held from 2006 to 2008. The hearings were recorded, with corresponding minutes and attendance sheets.

Puentevella said he would consult Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza about the transport groups' plea to defer the order's implementation.

He also asked the transport groups to submit a position paper on the matter by Monday.

Ang-See said that with the similar modus operandi in the cases mentioned by the CAACC, the kidnapping could have been pulled off by just one group.

Admit the problem

She said she was not discounting the possibility that this group was being protected by certain police or military personnel, whether active or retired.

Citing earlier arrests made by Peace, Ang-See said former police and military officers were behind kidnapping-for-ransom activities. She said that to stop such acts, an active campaign of the PNP Special Action Force was among those ordered.

But Ang-See expressed confidence in the capability of PNP Director General Jesus Verzosa and Peace to identify and arrest the groups behind the sudden escalation of kidnappings, especially the two Alabang cases.

She said stamping out kidnapping for ransom should start with the first step—"to admit that there is a problem." With a report from Nestra Quinsaat-Ando

Church brings activist's case to US Congress, seeks review of RP aid

By [illegible] A.

and foreign operations.

Grieves said the church needed "to ensure that our military aid to the Philippines is not reimbursing an already tragic situation regarding human rights there."

Balao, an Episcopal Church member, was abducted by armed men on Sept. 17, 2006, in La Trinidad, Benguet, a few meters from the Cordillera police headquarters in Camp Dangwa. He has not been seen since the crime. Balao was 49.

According to Grieves, the church decided to ask the US House committee's attention because of a conclusion that Episcopalians have made—that Balao's case illustrates the failure of the writ of amparo, a legal remedy recently issued by the Supreme Court to protect people whose rights have been violated by government activities or acts of omission.

A copy of Grieves' testimony was sent to the Episcopal leaders and by the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA), the indigenous rights organization that Balao had founded.

Amparo not enough

Balao's family was granted a writ of amparo by the Benguet Regional Trial Court after it concluded that the CPA leader's disappearance could be attributed to his political activities.

But Grieves said in her letter to the US lawmakers that the writ was "not enough to address the rampant impunity enjoyed by human rights abusers in the Philippines."

He cited a writ of amparo that was issued in December 2008 to help recover two abducted Bantay Bayan members.

"The Philippines government has yet to open an impartial investigation" because

BALAO: Abducted two September

the case involves a retired military officer who has been linked to human rights abuses, he said.

"We recommend that the United States government undertake a thorough investigation of military and human rights abuses committed by the Philippine government and deeply disappointed in the lack of response from the Philippine government, and with the continuation of US military aid despite the lack of progress on human rights," Grieves told the US House committee.

He said that as early as last year, Presiding Episcopal Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori wrote President Macapagal-Arroyo and the Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff, Gen. Alexander Yano, to plead for action against cases of human disappearances.

"We have been painfully aware of the extrajudicial killings and disappearances that have tarnished the human rights community of the Philippines

Repatriated sex workers to be debriefed by DSWD

By Nikko Dizon

QUARANTINE AND DEBRIEFING FOR repatriated victims of sexual abuse?

A Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) official said yesterday the agency was considering the implementation of a "policy on hold" Filipina sex workers repatriated to the Philippines from Malaysia.

Priscilla Cubillas, welfare attache to Malaysia, said his proposal to "quarantine and debrief" the victims is aimed at stopping the vicious cycle of making victims out of Filipina women who go there to work.

Most victims go straight home once they are repatriated, but Cubillas said this should not be the case. "They should be prevented right away because they hardly have reached their homes, and they are already thinking of how they could leave again. We cannot stop this cycle if we don't do anything about it," he added.

Cubillas, who is in the country to update Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral and other DSWD officials on the government's aid to to Filipina workers in Malaysia, said many of the undocumented workers feel the pressure of having to find work overseas after they are repatriated because they need to support their families.

Cubillas said his "policy on hold" proposal was being seriously considered by the DSWD, given the increasing number of Filipina women who fall prey to the sex trade once they set foot in Malaysia and become among the estimated 150,000 undocumented Filipina workers there.

Sixty-three Filipina prostitutes were rescued from brothels and sex dens by the Philippine Embassy from June to December last year and repatriated back to the Philippines. Since January this year, 12 had been sent back home.

Cubillas stressed that victims of sex trafficking need psycho-social and medical debriefing.

"It's okay for them to return, but they should go through the legal process. Otherwise, the chances of being exploited would be higher. They may have been lured to the scene in no small abuses, but they could still be subjected to abuse because they are undocumented workers," she added.

The debriefing could take a few days or a maximum of a week, depending on the victim's case.

Marinduque ICC '79, '84 reunions

THE 1984 AND 1979 HIGH SCHOOL graduates of the Immaculate Conception College in Marinduque will hold their class reunions on March 28 and April 11, respectively.

The batch 1984 graduates will hold their all-out jubilee celebration in Ayala, Alabang starting at 6 p.m. A fund-raising campaign will also be launched to raise the seed fund for the alumni's planned scholarship foundation.

The 1979 graduates meanwhile, will hold their 30th homecoming on April 11 in Boac, Marinduque.

All members of the two high school batches are invited to attend. For information on the activities of batch 84, please call Ms. Gilyn Go at 0920-6257502 or Amor Lobay at 0919-4202098. Email address: gilynlego@yahoo.com. For batch 79, please contact Ms. Stanford Mailing Tam at 09175691992. Email address: bellwam@yahoo.com.

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Warmest greetings to the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) as you hold your 12th National Convention of Lawyers.

This convention is indeed a great opportunity for all IBP members to discuss various compelling topics relevant to the Catholic Church and decent practice of your profession.

Your theme, "Upholding the Rule of Law: IBP's Continuing Challenge," shows your sincere efforts and determination to promote the rule of law and to equal application to all Filipinos regardless of status, color and beliefs.

I urge you to be steadfast in your continuing advocacy of fairness not only in the strict implementation and interpretation of our laws but also in taking into consideration the spirit of the law that gave life into the letters.

Good luck to all participants. Mabuhay!

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

SUPREME COURT OF THE PHILIPPINES
Manila

A confluence of factors sadly continues to accentuate the pervasive narrative in the Philippines. Almost day after day we hear and see stories of gross violations of the Constitution by the Republic's Filipino citizens, including rising food and oil prices, unemployment, and health care along with a host of other social services gone by the wayside, inevitably the overall picture for the majority of Filipino families is bleak.

Various attorneys from different sectors in society have long exerted efforts to give significant assistance to the plight of many Filipinos. In this regard, I would like to commend the officers and members of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) for their theme for the Rule of Law (IBP's Continuing Challenge in this year's 12th National Convention of Lawyers).

It is an extraordinary blessing that we remain in that "the illegal we do immediately while the unconstitutional takes a little longer," as the officers of the court, from our notable judiciary with constitutional, administrative, and legislative problems, the canon of public conscience under public service commitments rights.

In times like these, lawyers have the great challenge to help bring about a just society in our country, one where every member is given significance and respect and where the fruits of progress are shared by all and not just by a privileged few, one which is truly free and self-determining and not held hostage to vested interests both within and without.

The IBP, the largest organization of lawyers in the country, plays a pivotal role in the efforts to bring meaningful reform by and in the judiciary. By upholding and asserting the rule of law, professional competence, and ethical norms in serving our constituents, the IBP remains a guardian of those major instruments and is thus able to maintain the fine score of dignity and honor of our profession.

My congratulations to the officers and members of the IBP on the occasion of this year's National Convention. May your deliberations in your assemblies serve to be effective avenues, defenders, and protectors of truth and justice.

Mabuhay to you!

REYNATO S. PUNO
Chief Justice

INTEGRATED BAR OF THE PHILIPPINES

My very own as IBP National President has given me an opportunity and humbling perspective on how the law affects the lives of people. Indeed, the law is a powerful tool but can be used for good or bad, for the upholding of truth and justice or their possible subversion. At best, we would like such to endure. At worst, we discover, here the law affects the lives of our countrymen or we are a subversion of the law.

Upholding the rule of law is every lawyer's task. We swear by it when we pursue the legal profession. And that promise should be unbreakable. At times they and age when it is more important to show the law to subvert our words, the temptation to bypass the strict requirements of what is right, legal and proper are great. We face these temptations regularly. It is my hope that we continue to be upright and faithful ones in the noble areas of our profession.

I count these terms, thank you for your support in the Integrated Bar of the Philippines these past two years. Our tasks are not done. We therefore, should continue working together to constantly uphold the rule of law.

Mabuhay!

FELICIANO M. BAUTISTA
National President

12TH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF LAWYERS
Manila Hotel (TV)
March 26, 27 & 28, 2009

Theme: "Upholding the Rule of Law: IBP's Continuing Challenge"

PROGRAMME

Pre-Convention Day – 25 March 2009

8:00 AM – 6:00 PM
Registration of Participants

Day 1 – 26 March 2009

8:00 AM – 11:30 AM
Opening Ceremonies
Invocation
Hon. REYNATO S. PUNO
Chief Justice
Supreme Court of the Philippines

11:45 – 1:30 PM
Luncheon Program
Speech
Hon. MANUEL M. DOCTOR
Senate, Republic of the Philippines

2:00 PM – 5:15 PM
MCLE Lecture

7:30 PM – 11:00 PM
Dinner & Fellowship

Speech
Hon. OSCAR B. CRUZ, VICE GOVERNOR
Province of Pangasinan, Philippines

Day 2 – 27 March 2009

8:00 AM – 11:45 AM
MCLE Lecture

11:45 – 1:30 PM
Luncheon Program

Speech
Hon. RAMON JESUS P.E. PAREDES
Secretary of Finance

1:30 PM – 5:30 PM
MCLE Lecture

7:30 PM – 11:00 PM
Dinner & Awards Night

Speech
Hon. EDGARDO J. ANGARA
Senate Representative – LEGC

Day 3 – 28 March 2009

8:00 AM – 10:30 AM
MCLE Lecture

10:45 AM – 11:15 AM
FLEMAP SESSION

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Beyond the call of du

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THOSE SOLDIERS ARE BEING RECOG-nized for fighting the communist insurgency for rebuking a lost big contending a big amount of cash, and for saving lives during calamities.

Here are the cast of the Abdulwahab Boondaoran and Mukti Rosary Cloth's The Outstanding Philippine Soldiers for 2009:

• Lt. Col. Lope Ilagay mentioned to help the government crush the communist insurgency despite having been wounded twice by guerrillas in Leyte and famous that he believed that giving rebel returnees a house was one way to solve the conflict. He has topped the Gawad Kalinga for a housing project for the returnees in the two provinces.

• S/Sgt. Fidel Dobara played a major role in stopping the reorganization of the communist New People's Army in the countryside. Dedicated by the rebels

DIWARAN ISLAND RESORT The proposed master plan for Isla Diwaran by the Singapore-based Banyan Tree shows its longest development of the 85-ha property in Coron, which will reportedly create 12,000

Coron islet turning into next A

From page 1 | Arroyo came with Tourism Secretary Ace Durano and Trade Secretary Peter Favila.

Challenge to Phuket

Mr Arroyo said that the project, which is estimated to cost $240 million, would be the next Phuket, the popular resort in Thailand. He's company pioneered the development in that area.

"What he had been able to do there, he can certainly do here," she said.

He showed the master plan of the Isla Diwaran project to Ms Arroyo under the shade of trees.

The island's map shows that the beach with only fine white sand and few indigenous trees will have three hotels with villas, a marina with facilities for arrival by boat or by seaplane, and a town center where there will be restaurants, boutiques and retail outlets.

"All together, if fully developed, these [hotels] will have 600 rooms ... it is a full occupancy, we will have more than 1,000 tourists on this island alone," He said.

Almost 20 minutes by speedboat from Coron, the island will be a new attraction for tourists. On the way, seafaring-loving Tourism chiefs are seen. Lorna Kasch, a favorite site for divers, is also known for its diverse marine life.

12,000 jobs

As soon as the resort is completed, 3,000 people will be hired to work on the island, he said.

"We are expecting at least 12,000 people to acquire jobs directly and indirectly from this project," he said.

Ms Arroyo told a fisherman in the crowd, José Sackit, that on nearby Amargosa, residents no longer fished but worked in the high-end resort.

"Is that what you are also expecting?" she asked.

Sackit replied "yes, ma'am."

"It's not only in the operation but as well as in the construction and a lot of the people around ... are expecting that as this island resort is being built, roads will be constructed from the air-

7 food products of peanut bu

From page 6 | law ... to be intentionally injurious, unsafe or dangerous. As such, the same are hereby ordered banned from distribution, sale or offer of sale, or export," Duque said in an order dated March 23.

The seven Samson products are Mama Peanut Spread Sweet and Creamy, Lady's Corn Jam Special, Lady's Corn Jam with Langka, Mama Corn Jam, Lady's Corn Jam Regular, Lady's Corn Jam with Pinipig, and Bicol Chorizo Peanut Butter.

Duque said an urgency or voluntary entry should bug purchase or acquire the products for whatever reason. The order was only released to the public today through www.bfad.gov.ph, the website of the Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD).

"The manufacturers is directed to immediately recall all food products from the market, coordinate with and report its recall status to the BFAD," Duque said.

License suspended

On Monday Duque and BFAD Director Leslie Gutierrez personally delivered to Samson president Pedro Tanacan an order dated March 20 suspending the 36-year-old food manufacturing firm's license to operate for violation of current good manufacturing practices.

Duque said he was suspending Samson's license to operate "in the light of the recent labora-

Top Google execs stick to $

From page 6 | Schmidt has the third largest stake in the company, owning just shy of 9.4 million shares.

Page, 36, and Brin, 35, started Google while they were still students at Stanford University. The two hired Schmidt, 53, as CEO in 2001.

Schmidt received payments valued at $506,762 last year, mainly to cover personal security bills amounting to $402,262. Google also paid a total of $136,203 to fly Schmidt's family and friends on airplanes chartered by the Mountain View, California-based company.

Including his perks, Schmidt's 2008 compensation package edged up 6 percent from 2007 when his package totaled $478,662.

The Associated Press formula is designed to balance the value the company's board placed on the executive's total compensation package during the last fiscal year. The formula includes salary bonus, performance-related bonuses, perks, above-market returns on deferred compensation and the estimated value of stock options and awards granted during the year.

The calculations don't include changes in the present value of pension benefits, and they sometimes differ from the totals companies list in the summary compensation table of proxy statements filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, which reflect the size of the accounting charge taken for the executive's compensation in the previous fiscal year.

Multibillionaires

Limiting their salaries to $1 didn't seem like a big sacrifice for Schmidt, Brin and Page until 2008.

That's because they became multibillionaires as their holdings in Google soared eight-fold between the time of the company's initial public offering in August 2004 and the end of 2007.

Although all three men remain among the world's wealthiest people, they suffered a major setback last year.

Combined, their fortunes plunged by a staggering $23.8 billion, or nearly 36 percent, in 2008, as investors began to fret that Google would be hurt by the faltering economy.

Google held up better than many people feared as its revenue rose 26 percent to $21.8 billion, but the company's stock price still plummeted from $691.48 at the close of 2007 to $307.65 at the end of last year.

Google shares have rallied along with the overall market since prompted the company to recently discuss its employees' ears to exercise total of 7.84 million stock years.

The repricing gives 15,642 employees who participated in the program a better chance to strike it rich in the years.

Signaling its intent on the our own mom stock options is repeated, Google wants to another 8.3 million shares the pool of available awards. The request will be voted on the company's annual meeting on May 7.

Other Silicon Valley luminaries, such as Yahoo Inc. co-founder Jerry Yang and Inc. cofounder Steve Jobs, have limited their salaries to while serving as CEO.

But tough CEOs haven't been as egalitarian. For instance, Oracle Corp. CEO Larry Ellison pocketed a $1-million salary the company's last fiscal and received an additional million stock options valued $73.4 million when they were granted.

ty: The Philippines' outstanding soldiers

Sarge lights up runways and other unsung soldiers' stories

By Inquirer AI

...ushered a program called the "Philippine Navy Ships and Yards Management and Information System," which allows soldiers to learn the names and location of any vessel with a few clicks on the computer.

Outstanding soldiers

Buenaventura, 42, and Calmatis, 38, are among the 10 outstanding Filipino soldiers who will receive an award today from Malacañang for their innovations despite insufficient government resources to improve the conditions of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The other awardees are Lt. Col. Lope Dingog, Ty/Sgt. Pedro Cebara and M/Sgt. Romeo Jacolagan of the Army; Col. Ramon Tanalgo and T/Sgt. Ramon Calegatos of the Navy; Col. Restituto Padilla Jr. and S/Sgt. Elias Asentria of the Air Force; and Col. Delio Herrera Jarelo of the Judge Advocate General Service. One obese Air Force individual survives.

The awarded will take home a plaque and P250,000 in cash, courtesy of the Metrobank Foundation and the Honey Club of Makati, the organizers of the annual search for "The Outstanding Philippine Soldiers" (TOPS).

No pay for innovations

In their entire service in the AFP, Buenaventura and Calmatis have not asked for compensation for their innovations.

Both were content with the outstanding achievement medal given them by Ida Arroyo a few years ago, which they were during the interview with the Inquirer.

"This one is for my achievements recognized by the President," Calmatis said, pointing at the red and yellow striped ribbon pinned on his left chest.

Buenaventura agreed, saying that the award money he would receive for devising the portable runway lighting system had already been allocated for the schooling of his four young children.

Calmatis spoke of a similar plan....80 percent of the award money is now reserved for his two young sons.

The rest of the cash prize has been designated for their respective units.

Bright ideas

In October 2002, when Buenaventura dropped by a stockroom at Sangley Point for a reason he could no longer remember, it was as if a light bulb flicked on in his mind.

A communication electronics information system technician of the 204th Aerospace Operations Squadron, Buenaventura said he saw in the storeroom discarded glass covers, or what was left of the old runway lights at the former US base.

Heeding what a provincial politician at Sangley Point, so much so that during heavy rains, the runway lights always got submerged.

"When the US Air Force left Sangley Point, no one was left to shoulder the costly maintenance of the runway lights," said Buenaventura, who has served the AFP for 23 years now.

Realizing that he needed to do something, he began to tinker with the abandoned glass covers, soldering three tiny sixty five rims and aluminum wings until he came up with yellow-painted runway lights.

He installed a motorcycle battery to each component so light them up.

"When it looks like it would flood, we just remove them from the runway and put them back once the waters subside," he said.

Buenaventura recalled how his many innovations enabled life in...

...ways to fly back to Manila from Tagaytay in the dead of night in 2003.

"Since the airstrip in Tagaytay is too dark, the portable runway lights were loaned from Sangley Point via C-130," he said.

The Metrobank is also supporting Buenaventura in integrating the dual band handheld radio into the MG-520AG attack helicopter, thus paving a cost-effective way to utilize the aircraft's existing communication equipment.

"Communication is very important, especially in big encounters when pilots have to be closely coordinated with soldiers on the ground," he said.

Making work easier

As for Calmatis, he made work easier for the Navy in terms of profiling and keeping the overhead and repair of its vessels and hardships at each.

The Navy has also clinched the old-fashioned mode of plotting the locations of its hardships on the Philippine seas with thumbtacks on a piece of plywood through the system's integration with a geographic mapping information program.

"There was no need to buy expensive technology. I merely used what was available, such as the Microsoft Office," Calmatis said.

The system is an offshoot of a document recording and tracking system that Calmatis initiated some eight years ago during his stint at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City. It is the same tracking system now implemented in certain government agencies.

Calmatis doubted subtly as he recalled how he ended up working for the military in 1990.

He really wanted to become a priest, he said. But in a twist of fate, he finished the exam that would have been his ticket to the seminary.

With a little push from his father, then a corporate investment officer in charge of the Office of the Director for Intelligence at the Fernando Air Base in Lipa City, Batangas, Asentria recovered a small bag containing roughly P90,000, which was earlier stolen from a fellow soldier in the barracks area of the 1570th Combat Group. Despite his good, he immediately returned the money that was intended for the rightful group's safety. He was also instrumental in the arrest of an imposter who was able to get a P300,000 loan from a bank at the Base Air Base.

• Col. Pedro Herrera-Jarelo chose to serve in the military than to pursue a career in a regular firm.

Working at the Judge Advocate General Service, the lawyer played a vital role in the prosecution of former military comptroller Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, and 284 junior officers, who incurred the Oakwood mutiny in July 2003.

...able to earn a living.

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...very report and findings of contamination of the bacteria Salmonella on samples of peanut spread and peanut butter products which were collected in the market and in the establishment itself, and the audit inspection conducted by the BFAD."

Lab analysis

Based on the laboratory analysis and inspection of the plant, Sarraya "has failed and is recommendably failing to comply with the current Good Manufacturing Practices, violating Administrative Order No. 153 series 2004 thereby compromising the good quality and safety of Sarraya's products," he said.

The suspension order came nearly two weeks after the BFAD announced that two batches of Yummy Sweet and Creamy Peanut Butter (450 grams and 224 grams) were found contaminated with Salmonella.

In a public advisory order issued on March 12, BFAD ordered Sarraya to immediately recall from the market its Yummy products belonging to the two batches. BFAD said all the other product batches of Sarraya were free of Salmonella contamination.

On the day that Duque and Gutierrez served the suspension order, Sarraya administrative officer Hilyna Carvallo said the company had already recalled all Sarraya Sweet and Creamy Peanut Butter products from the market.

Carvallo said Sarraya was getting its peanuts from India or China and that it had asked two private laboratories to check them for Salmonella.

Report from (Inno) Ruyi/Inquirer

1 salaries

ISSN 0116-2042 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER VOL. 29 NO. 109

OPINION

Packing the House

EDITORIAL

TALK ABOUT "LAYING THE PREDICATE." SENATE President Juan Ponce Enrile, who famously enriched the Philippine political dictionary with that clinical phrase which he used during the Estrada impeachment trial, thundered last month against Speaker Prospero Nograles's plan to add—by congressional fiat—50 more congressional seats to the Senate.

"Subukan nila [Let them try]. They can go ahead and do it and let's see if it will happen," Enrile said then. He was speaking about the plan of the House of Representatives to create the new seats through a mere resolution, not a law that would have required the participation of the Senate.

Soon after, however, Enrile filed a bill in the Senate, seeking to add—wait for it; wait for it—100 more seats in the House! His reasons: "Being a democratic and republican state, our very own people expect no less than proper representation so that their voices will be heard, their concerns will be addressed and their rights will be protected."

To be sure, Enrile's proposal is not unconstitutional. But we fear it exploits a constitutional provision to steer, not the national traverse, but the political traverse of an unpopular administration.

The basic law defines the membership of the House clearly enough: "The House of Representatives shall be composed of not more than two hundred and fifty members, unless otherwise fixed by law, who shall be elected from legislative districts..." The limit of 250 includes the party-list representatives, who "shall constitute twenty per centum of the total number of representatives."

In the 14th Congress (and according to the chamber's own secretariat), the House consists of 215 district representatives and 22 party-list representatives (for a total of 238, about five percent short of the original limit).

The Constitution also provides that: "Within three years following the return of every census, the Congress shall make a reapportionment of legislative districts based on the standards provided in this section."

The last census was completed in August 2007; that means, on the face of it, this Congress has until August 2010 to reapportion the country's legislative districts.

This sounds ear-and-dried. But in reality, no wholesale redistricting took place after the 1990 or 1995 or 2000 national census. The new districts created since the Constitution was ratified in 1987, such as those of Makati City, were largely the product of a political campaign waged both within Congress and outside it. This approach, it seems to us, is better suited to our needs—and our resources. Let the countenances of a particular district settle the issue of redistricting among themselves; they are the ones most affected), not the party in power seeking new ways to keep their majority.

What about the cayon constitutional province?

We must not allow ourselves to be beaten on the head with this seemingly clear order—found in Article VI, Section 5 (4)— to reapportion legislative districts. Congress had signally failed to follow this instruction three previous times; we say it is in the greater public interest to delay compliance one more time, until after the Arroyo administration, with which Enrile is now indelibly identified, leaves office.

We should not forget that there are even more express provisions in the Constitution that Congress has failed (deliberately) to follow. The Charter, for instance, "prohibits political dynasties," but since it left the matter to Congress, that barbed of nepotism, the country is still waiting for the passage of the necessary enabling law.

We should also keep in mind, as a time of economic distress, the enormous cost of the proposed addition of new congressional districts: billions of pesos in additional pork, hundreds of millions in additional staff expenses. Do we really need this, at this time?

Thus, our suggestion: We ask that candidates for congressional seats in overpopulated areas run in part on the basis of their position on the issue of redistricting; that the 15th Congress, which comes into office on June 30 next year, enact the necessary law creating the new seats wholesale (it has until August 2010 to comply with the letter of the Constitution); and that Enrile and company turn their attention to other, much more pressing matters. That way, we get "proper representation" from the representatives we already employ.

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Repeated nightmares

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

IS THE INVISIBLE SETTER "BATTLE FOR memory" in this country triggering repeated nightmares?

"My name is not Rigoin," marauded former President Joseph Estrada said. "It is Erap. Stop calling me Erap."

"Rigoin" masquerades the Cavite murder of PR man Salvador Dacer and his driver, claims fugitive former cop Cesar Mancao in a new affidavit.

"Did about Jose Velarde, Rigoin other name? Did amnesia blot this out? Or did he forget it, in converting funds for plunder, the Jueteng payola found that he and boss Atherton "were one and the same person."

Bruce Harris Bay, Parliament Minor Jr. honored into Shinshine City. He noted his "absence of winning a national election position" in 2010, impliedly remember Ferdinand Jr. in bottle fatigues, with a bayonet, and a Makapatang balisong in 1986? Hours later, the classroom, with "Sangbong" in tow, scrambled aboard helicopters to escape Angelo Reyes' crusade saving his the Palace.

Heavy that. I loved long enough to see the unimaginable," snapped the insightful 44-year old Jose San columnist Mayette Tabuda. "Died the curse of the old: to witness again the same sorry history, all the costly lessons forgotten, mistakes repeated as if they never were."

"I remember how my sisters spoke in allegories [during martial law]," she recalled. "In college, I learned from (them) whose voices were too small to be heard in the inside that death in this country was the ultimate luxury. Living was just a little harder than dying because it took longer."

"I would not have believed nightmares repeated themselves. But early this month, Joseph Estrada confided to a rally in Ilocos Norte that he'd be forced to run for the presidency if no other leader could unite the national opposition. Only vowed to save again the country as the son of this historical, as well effect.

"To live long enough to witness this is to realize how valuable the history were—and how

Conclusion

HOW MUCH TIME IS LOST IF THE VOTING and precinct tallying remain manual?

Gus-Antonio has group did a time-and-motion study on this and came up with the conclusion that only half a day is lost. Or so it says a bill that Tabuda is not a bad deal. For a process that is open and transparent and home only to minimal cheating. The ballots and the electoral returns [the] remain the two most reliable documents in the whole process, which is why without shunting happens in the counting, only dubious demand to go back to the files.

The promise tallying takes only hours to 12 hours. It's the any municipal, provincial and national canvassing that takes anywhere from 24 to 40 days. There is no need to computerize the first, there is need only to computerize the second. The second is the interminable part, which is rife with cheating.

How to computerize canvassing?

After the votes are tallied at the precinct level, they are brought to the canvassing center in the schools. Still, under the watchful eyes of the candidates' representatives and random observers, the results are encoded. The IDs are validated and posted on the Website all in one.

Of vital importance is that the coding of the IDs uses a program that is not proprietary or secret but is known to everyone and accessible to everyone. The program is Microsoft Excel. That's a program understandable to any accountant or college student, and can be followed by anyone on the Web. Certainly it can be followed by the staff and supporters of the candidates who have a special interest in the outcome.

That's the Open Electoral System or OES. The operational word is "open." Which means visible, observable, transparent. The downside is low and the upside plenty.

The Comelec has printed out the documents, some of it written enough to be taken seriously. The operation of four San Juan barangays for a second: half a day, and at most a day. The notion that the short plethora of minutes (some 60,000 in various precincts) will invite cheat-

Turn over to page A13

Gus' lament

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

ing Gus answers in this way: Better 60,000 than a handful, or even just one. At the very least, it is not easy to bribe 60,000 people while it is easy to bribe a handful or one person. At the very least the encoding at the precinct level is verifiable, using as it does a program that may be checked by everyone at every turn. The encoding by a handful or people or one person is not, particularly when it uses a program inscrutable only to a few or one. The first relies on observation, the second relies on faith. Only fools and mavericks will repose their faith in the Comelec.

While at this, I recall that Ober Wolfe had in mind a project during the last elections calling on the citizens to ensure the integrity of elections by taking photographs of the tallies at the precinct levels with their cell phones. I don't know why that can't be done alongside the OES. You put the wrong tally on the Web, people can always correct it with their pictures of the actual one. But the point remains: The process is open, transparent, verifiable in whole and to part.

It's also dirt cheap compared to the Comelec's 0MB project. The latter is priced at P13.3 billion, which 0MB has just upped into San. The Comelec originally called for P22 billion, reduced this to P11.9 billion, and finally settled for the P13.3 billion. The P13.2 billion remains highway robbery. Or it is more than a bribe, it is a multipurse extort: Look at the figures and you'll see that it pours in PCs at P300,000 per unit. At that price, you can almost have a limited Ohlan. It also got to carry all the Cyberspace places in Metro Manila, you'll know that P20,000 will get you decent specs and an LCD monitor to go with the CPU.

How does one explain this collective torture of memory? There's no one simple reason. The instinct-cum-for tradition of Filipinos is spelling the next meal. "They want solutions with the least pain." Many schools don't educate. Flawed textbooks, for one, distort history. Those who expose misdirection are skinned in public by paid hacks. The Marcoses, for one, handcuff revisions of history.

Amnesia serves the entrenched oligarchs just fine. The "lost" lost with impunity. And they take stress with the thieving "ours." No one is jailed for fertilizer scams or overpriced Asset Reform Lamps. The rest amounts into more repeated nightmares.

Truncated memories of his much revered priest Sen. Padilla Larson to protest as a reformer. Two record contractors from Military to intelligence Security Group torture shutdown or the Hermosa Bulldozing rollover—and now the Three Cotabato murders.

"In this context, it seems everything is unfamily responsible," Arroyo vice president Noli Bengson Jose noted. "Truth frequently becomes whatever pleases the powers that be.

The struggle against historical forgetting is never ending... The temptation towards tyranny and forgetting are never-ending."

Why bother with memory then? Only justice based on truth binds a nation, says Mr. Cliff Everett's Louis Bridges. Democracy seeks a foundation of truth and therefore demands accountability. "The past is impossible to ignore." And memory creates deterrence.

Anyone reader Cathy Quiogue welcomes newspaper and broadcast statistic "developing checklists." A monthly update of names could be a good start. Including up to the next week's elections, she writes. It would give more meaning to all the work that went into answering those notes.

"All of us must remember ... and upon our hearts to human memory, Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel insisted at Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp visits. "To do not must. My pain to become the future ... of our children's generation."

(E-mail: mercboy.cod@gmail.com.)

Gus' DES will cost the Comelec only P4 billion. Our hunches to add that this not a bid, this is a system's process being recommended by the country's IT community to ensure honest elections. They are in fact recommending that the Comelec buy the computers at the local level (or not rent) to transportation and give the local shops some business. Some of the equipment may be donated afterward to schools in the countryside.

The difference between P4 billion and P11.3 is P7.3 billion. At a time when the world and this country are pumping money into hard times, that's both of us recommend to stop-gap-implement. It is totally unacceptable.

Frankly, I can't understand why after every election, candidates complain bitterly about having been cheated, and yet do nothing, or next to nothing, to stop it before the elections. Candidates get no busy investing in organization, proportion, logistics that they forget that none of these is going to matter unless their votes are counted right. And the Comelec feels well before Benjamin Abalos has excelled only its cunning ways wrong.

You know the motive for massive cheating exists. You know the opportunity for massive cheating exists. You don't do something massively about it, you deserve to be massively cheated.

This is one particular case where the slurs bills ought to be singing all over the place. Instead, the Comelec's current computerization program proposes two things. It proposes the humongous theft of money, and it proposes the humongous theft of votes. There are other systems that are cheap, honest to both aspects. There are other systems that cost less money and less cheating. Or put more positively, there are other systems that bring more bang for the buck and make votes safer than money in the bank. The Open Electoral System is one such system.

Our imposition is a valid lament. But what to hear it, and we will soon be hearing that lament from ourselves.

True leadership

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

NO SOONER HAS FORMER PRIME MINISTER Tony Blair flown out last Monday after the dinner hosted by Mayor Binghbing that controversy erupted over the report that he will be serving as senior adviser to the President on De Mindanao problem. A Mindanao province emailed Gen Blair a non-working visa. But Press Secretary Jorge Pe-mode says it is currently silent, he interpreted that help "in terms of advice and experience." That's exactly where Blair can lose help, for after all he was the British prime minister in charge of a government to the decades-old Northern Ireland conflict.

There are many differences between the conflict there and our Mindanao problem, but there are also several similarities, principally their resolution route. The conflict in Northern Ireland stemmed principally from the desire of the Catholic minority to be united with the Republic of Ireland, owing to the perceived discrimination against them. They never was allowed to vote or hold government positions for a long time in the United Kingdom, among our Muslim situation is for of discontent stems from the issue of ancestral domain and their desire to establish their own government, similar to Northern Ireland's independence movement, but all the good books which they have been neglected.

* * *

Re-reading my Tuesday column titled 'Blair as major catalyst for Northern Ireland's peace,' I realized there were points that need to be clarified. I rushed that column last Monday, so that I could be at the Asian University's Science building, the Bangkapid Center for peace, to get my a bus to the library for Irish Architecture. I tried to summarize the history of the conflict, but some friends felt I should have begun by explaining why Northern Ireland is part of United Britain when it's a small corner of the territory of Ireland, a separate and independent nation.

The conquest of Ireland by Britain began in the time of Henry VIII and his daughter Elizabeth I, but the Irish people fought them. The ongoing never stopped their fight for independence. It's interesting to note, though, that historian, the political organization that figured

prominently in Northern Ireland's modern history was actually founded in 1905 by an Irish journalist named Arthur Griffith. Later this Sinn Fein was linked to the deadly paramilitary group, the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

In 1921, after years of bitter conflict, Britain and the Irish rebels agreed to a treaty giving southern Ireland dominion status, i.e., as a self-governing country of Great Britain, called the Irish Free State. But like the Filipinos in the 1930s and 1940s, this did not quell the separatist in Irish hearts for complete independence. In 1948 Irish party leader John A. Costello became prime minister and his government take with the Republic of Ireland Act, declaring the complete independence of the Republic, putting the UK in 1921.

* * *

Northern Ireland, however, remained with Britain and became the center of violence over the next violent conflicts as courts, between the Protestant majority, who wanted to remain with Great Britain, and the Catholic minority who desired to be united with Ireland. Tremendous efforts were exerted by the British and Irish governments to bring the warring conflict. The major breakthrough factored by Blair, the Good Friday Agreement of April 1998, which called for the decommissioning of arms, devolved government and public law enforcement, was subjected to a referendum in Northern Ireland, where the yes vote won overwhelmingly. In addition, another referendum was held in Ireland itself to approve the necessary changes to two articles in its constitution, in which it formally renounced any claim to sovereignty over Northern Ireland and accepted that the will of the majority there should be the determining factor in its future. Although there have been some setbacks, principally with the possible unification of Northern Ireland with the old motherland. The yes vote there was also overwhelming.

* * *

In the two referendums, the Blair government campaigned hard for yes votes even if it means that the British nation could ultimately lose its territory. One reason it achieved this tremendous "cyber-coup" by Blair, among them, no change in the status of Northern Ireland without the expressed consent of the people; the power-sharing scheme to be returned from London to Northern Ireland; humane and equality for all; and those those who are or threaten violence would be excluded from government and kept in prison. What was unbelievable about Blair's "package" was that none could actually be found in the agreement. Having served eight years, they all rely on the sincerity and credibility and his perceived sincerity. That is the true mark of leadership.

* * *

Blair's message to the Filipino government and people cannot be overstressed. As the Northern Ireland peace negotiations showed, any peace process is bound to suffer setbacks, but the important thing is to stay focused on the goal of peace and keep going. Only then can there be success. The remarkable breakthrough of the Northern Ireland issue of Drumgh just four months after the Good Friday Agreement is one the recent acts of violence in the province. On Feb. 5, Robert McCartney, one of the former enemy leaders during peace, hailed by a 1,500-member assembly created by Blair, drove from various parties, arousing a final referendum on whether to go with Britain or Ireland.

Blair's role was also crucial in the Philippines, too much that depended on his leadership to get to the dogs. I especially like the remark made by the former ambulance IRA commander Martin McGuinness, now deputy first minister to First Minister Ian Paisley, when they visited President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in October 2007. Said McGuinness: "Up until the 26 March this year, Ian Paisley and I never had a conversation about anything—not even about the weather—and now we have been very closely together over the last seven months and there's been no angry words between us... This shows we are not for a new course."

One billion words for Earth

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

FROM 8:00 PM. TO 9:00 PM. ON SATURDAY, March 28, in Earth Hour, people all over the world are asked to switch off their lights for one hour. This is our only saving energy but also carrying a vote for Earth.

This year, Earth Hour (Jose Semestra of Manila) has been transformed into the world's first global election, a one-hour referendum on Earth's global warming. For the first time in history, people of all ages, nationalities, races and backgrounds could use their light switch as their vote. Switching off the lights is a vote for Earth. Leaving them on is a no.

Voting for Earth with the use of the light switch should be easier than the 2010 automated Philippine elections. And its impact is global. Surging to one billion votes for Earth will send a powerful message to climate activities. Before you know it the 00 minutes are over and you'd probably want to stay to the dark a little longer.

The World Wildlife Fund is urging the world to vote for Earth and create the largest of one billion votes, which will be presented to world leaders at the Global Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen 2009. This meeting will influence national policies and governments to take action against global warming. Opera House and the Eiffel Tower followed it to the theater for the people of the world to make their voices heard.

Earth Hour began as a small effort in Sydney in 2007, when more than two million homes and businesses switched off their lights. Organizers said the 2008 effort grew into a movement for global sustainability. Some 50 million people participated and switched off their lights, landmark landmarks such as the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, Rome's Colosseum, Canada's Niagara Falls and the Coca-Cola billboard in Times Square all stood to be covered in the darkness. We should have our own Philippine landmarks darkened. What about all those Christmas lights on Edsa?

This year, Earth Hour Fiesta moves to the next level. The goal: one billion people switching off their lights as part of a global vote for planet Earth. Join Earth in a global call to action for every individual, every group, and every community. It is a call to stand up and do something for planet Earth's endangered species. Over 70 renowned musicians have pledged their support and additional are expected to cast their vote for Earth this Saturday. The number is growing every day.

You can support the multimedia group of Earth Hour and Star Earth websites. Texts social networking sites in Cyberspace—Facebook, Skype, Twitter, etc.—are participating. If you are able to navigate the Internet, or if someone could do it for you, then you can participate. Log on to earthhour.org, and your short message could even upload a photo or two of yourself and it's sent to planet Earth. By message: "Assuring Earth. Great Mother, we pledge to protect you." I uploaded a photo of myself and the Big Dipper, source and the Amazonian cliffs of Gozo, Palawan.

That is part of the Star Earth campaign for "one billion words for Earth." This is using the power of words for a cause. The process starts and the human network of Earth is activated. Earth Hour is going to talk about and write about. Words and images are key. One could do articles, blogs, messages, posters, streamers, stickers, buttons, etc. You can download "We Vote Earth" sample designs from the Internet and make your own.

By the way, March 22 was World Water Day. Planet Earth is a watery planet, that's why it is also called the Blue Planet. Viewed from outer space, Earth looks like a blue jewel. It's the water that makes our planet beautiful.

Now, Earth, with its diverse and awesome life forms (including more than 6 billion humans) that need water, is sending an SOS. There is a new

A question of candidates

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

A YEAR AGO I WROTE IN THIS SPACE, ("The state imperative: a reflection," 3/19/08) that our presidential elections are not elections for the future, which goes beyond insisting on our likewise but also recognizes our obligations to each other, our local and then our national communities. This means remembering the concept of debates on local or national issues, not as divisive issues in an economical fireworks displays, but to preserve the gains and toss on which the elections a called upon to conduct a verdict.

It was also a year ago, in the same piece, that I said that the democratic process in which the scores of public opinion and of law should reign supreme: the deciding line being life, liberty, or property hanging in the balance depending on the verdict.

This time, I'd like to focus on something else we've lost, and which a restored civic sense can help recover: our alienation from our leaders. Even as so many groups, meeting on their rights, thunder and shriek, the power supports being exercised, and/or in terms of activities, ending up resisting the idea of rights as something relevant only to nationalists but apparently never to majorities.

There are subtle minorities derive comfort and, who knows, even inspiration from their leaders, those same leaders end up representing fewer and fewer people—which makes matters even more frustrating to the majority who feel that those leaders do not—because they cannot—speak for them, much less lead them.

One needs to ask, who made them leaders in the first place? For elected officials, the obvious answer is: The People. Having stepped forward and submitted their services, those officials compete with each other to get the support votes of The People. They even get promised some time, and, in due course, decide to present themselves to The People for the biggest job of all: president. Who, then, are these kind of the people who want to become president every six years, only one with any need.

I need to wonder why the system is considered

the starting ground for the presidency considering that the latter is an executive position while being a senator is supposed to be a function of the act of drafts. The undisputed reason is that, aside from the president and the vice president, only a senator can claim a national mandate; therefore, but any person wanting to present himself to the country, the senate is the equivalent of the primary system in other countries. If senator has made the cut, can prove possession of a national constituency, and therefore he possesses the proven capacity to seek and acquire a broad national mandate, without which any presidential bids is primary, and would be doomed to fail.

But I've come to another conclusion, and it has to do with what senators are inspired to do, once they get elected to the senate. From the start let me make an assumption: that senators are people who should be presidents, has a bias for people of action, and not reflection; but men of action are also judged if they are capable of self-control. The hopefully scholarly and honest and the active but unstable have their roles to play at different stages and qualifications but still never be president.

Consider, then, the example of a senator who, obsessed with his status than image, involves such questions of parliamentary procedure because he's not getting enough media play and thinks that the rules are bothersome, anyway is surprising actually considering that Antonio Maria is also a lawyer, a person whose very existence is a surprise reversal of the rules of nature, which obviously cares for nothing but nutrition. He has taken on the job of being a legislator not out of a desire to craft laws, which can only see the light of day if their passage is accompanied by a scrupulous regard for parliamentary procedure, but merely to get his name in the papers.

That senator might argue that he is, vengeful, mentally, an executive, and that the reality of our politics is such that the senate is a necessary stepping-off point to the presidency, but contrast that senator with another senator, equally executive-minded, but who sees his mind as mastering procedure and learning how to craft legislation, no matter how tedious it may all seem.

In the end, the one who brushes aside procedure does so at his own peril, because he becomes the ignorance condemns him to being a blustering blowhard while the one who had the self-discipline—and humility—to learn the rules so as to use his position and the system that does will be the master of the legislative instrument vying to take advantage of his laws.

However, here's another thing to consider. You could, conceivably, become a senator without need of a party, or by hopping from one to another depending on the issues. You cannot do so politically. Suddenly because it's necessary, he can afford to be a voice in the wilderness. A president has no such luxury. Being president requires not only a national mandate, it requires a national network of political support. You must be able to count not just support in order to be elected, but you must hold that support for the duration of your administration.

Michael Macdonald, in "Why Race Matters in African Politics," (Steven Gutkeind and Patrick Philippe Schmidt, "Democracy's guiding principle is that of citizenship. That involves both the right to be treated by fellow human beings as equal with respect to the making of collective choices and the obligations of those implementing such choices to be equally accountable and accessible to all members of the polity."

Therefore, before we even consider those who are eager to pursue themselves as our next presidents, the question we must ask is whether it is not enough for them to say they want to be president. We need to ask: Who has endorsed their candidacy?

A new dad

I WAS ONLY 14 YEARS OLD WHEN MY DAD ACCEPTED Bryan Ann' invitation to bunnie. My brother and I were not prepared when he left. One heart attack and that was it for him.

Because of my father's death, I hated Bryan Ann so much that I never questioned my faith. I never stood so hard in all of my existence. Pain was perfectly defined to me then. Each day I asked God why.

He took my dad so early. I felt that I was unfair. Every day I woke up asking many why's—until my counselor advised me to live with my questions and God would answer them in time.

YOUNG BLOOD

Claire Cruz-Marucut

My worst is to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? My solution: conversations from the twenty-something and below. —Ed.

I loved the world trying to speed up my maturity. I had to take charge of many things my father had left behind. Many was dismissed on how to handle the business and some taxes in the time. I couldn't blame her for not knowing since she was born to a wealthy family and everything was given and done for her. She sees us as good Catholic schools saying that there we would learn the right values and what is right and what is wrong. It sounded encouraging, we were going to be raised outside our homes.

I took this like I was growing up alone and it wasn't easy. I entrusted the responsibility that fell on me. I tried to raise a mother and a brother. I had to learn many things. But more importantly, I had to learn to decide for myself and face the consequences of my decisions.

The most important decision I had to make was choosing the man I would spend the rest of my life with: Dong.

Ours was a complicated relationship. He was the uncle of my brother's girlfriend then. He was seeing someone and so was I. Both of our partners were working abroad.

Dong and I knew that we were better off with our respective partners. But the critical mass was: Would I be happy when other people's happy because everybody thought we were perfect for each other? Or was it time for me to choose and be responsible for the happiness I discovered? When I chose to be happy, I prepared for the trouble it would bring.

Dong's relatives wasn't half what they found out about us, but our partners knew. I heard nothing from his parents. My mom was also supportive of my decision as long as it would make me happy, though she wasn't so happy about it.

I was scrutinized by Jessy's parents with open arms. More than that, they made me feel like I was their own daughter. I passed a new father who loves me and treats me as his family.

One day when I came home from work, my father in law surprised me by giving me a wooden jewelry box he himself had made. It was as big as I wanted it to be. I learned that he had kept it out of my sight when he was still working on it. When it was time for me to come home from the office, he would call me up and tell me to prepare to leave.

When Dong and I were looking for a bed to buy, we had a hard time finding the right one. I wanted a bed that was built higher than those we saw in the malls so that I could keep some of my stuff under it. Our room was small so we had to maximize the use of the little the space we had. Our problem was solved when my father-in-law offered to build us one, according to my specifications.

Almost two years ago, Strong 8 celebrated her birthday. He went to the party and brought her a gift. But when we approached her to hand over the gift, she gave me an angry look and turned away. My mother in law freaked out and made a scene. The incident became a big issue among my husband's relatives.

Although I could have very well defended myself, sometime took up the cudgels for me. My father-in-law faced everyone and protected me.

What a dad extraordinaire. I told my in-laws that anything anyone during wedding day was to them from my mind. I told them I felt sorry for what happened to the family and to me. But he assured me it wasn't my fault.

I wonder what my dad would have said if he were still around. I am sure he would also advise to try to understand other people.

It was then that I realized that Bryan Ann didn't take my dad away totally. He lent me a father, just like Dr. had. Enough to protect and love. Has like a real one. Coincidentally my father-in-law's name is Jose and he is good at carpentry.

I know that no matter how old I would get, I would still need a father. And if my Jose just gave me what I needed. I'm so glad to have my father-in-law. I have the little moments when he runs his fingers through my hair, when he joins me and my husband in bathing our dog or goes with us to the grocery or the nearest shopping. He is more than what I prayed for.

Claire Cruz-Marucut, 28, works as a desk officer in First Metro Investment Corp.

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THEY SAID

Unrepentant

"Society has an obligation to transmit a message that if you commit a crime, you must pay for it. They haven't moved up to that yet. Why were they freed when they were set to ask for forgiveness?"

—Sen. Benigno Aquino III, after President Arroyo pardoned the 13 remaining soldiers convicted of murdering by Jalosa

Humane justice

"Justice, no matter how straightforward, should not fail its humane dimension, otherwise it becomes cruelty. It is not very comforting when skilled release, that is why the temporarily left on the group of persons who cannot pull one trigger."

—archbishop Oscar Cruz

Spratlys' loss as an Arroyo legacy

LOCATED SOME 200 NAUTICAL miles east of Palawan, the Spratly Islands were discovered in 1949 by "Admiral" Tomas Cloma, owner of a Manila Institute. He named it Kalayaan Islands. The Spratlys, as the islands have come to be popularly known in recent years, could suffer the same fate as that of Sabah which was included in the Malaysian Federation more than three decades ago. Sabah now belongs to the Federation of Malaysia except that Malaysia is paying a token amount, as yearly rentals, to the heirs of the Sultanate of Sulu.)

Referring to the archipelagic baselines bill approved by Congress to comply with the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas (Unclos) and the Asean-China Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, "Malacañang said it would hold a dialogue with China over the potentially explosive Congress-ratified baselines bill, but would not be sidetracked from signing it." However, Sen. Miriam Santiago said, "Are we going to surrender just because they (China) have a stronger Army and Navy? What's important is we stand for our country and territory." (Inquirer, 3/20/09)

Everybody knows that the Spratlys are claimed by the Philippines, China, Vietnam and Taiwan. Some islands are occupied by these claimants. Like my friend Alfred "Number" Marcos began it in the Freedom issue of Feb. 22, 1995 when Sabah was lost, the Kalayaan group of islands will also become an "Arroyo legacy" since the Spratlys is lost also to the People's Republic of China.

—GODOFREDO G. PITOGO SR., Ret. Comm'dore Navy
Cebu

LETTERS

Editorial lack of outrage discomfiting

Inquirer's MARCH 9 EDITORIAL ("Reforms?") was a bit dissembling. While it implicated responsibility on Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and the military regarding extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances, it did not express outrage.

The last sentence ("Bebelyn was just another victim") summed up the editorial. It seemed to say matter-of-factly that there are many other victims and Bebelyn just happens to be one of them. (Ergo: Nothing dealt?)

Bebelyn's case brings us to another dimension. Before Bebelyn, most victims (of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances) were mainly opposition(ists) and activists; now, the victim is the daughter—someone with blood ties to and closer to the heart—of a New People's Army commander.

Bebelyn is not just a victim and her father is not just a rebel. He is a revolutionary, someone who seeks to change the political and economic system. So before I like the millions of poor Filipinos who have been silenced and disempowered by the whims and wrath of the high and mighty.

The killing of Bebelyn is condemnable, and the apathy toward human rights violations is despicable. There is reason to be outraged.

—RUEL L. PE,
Concerned Artists of the Philippines
jlp704@yahoo.com

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Rizal and Makati Avenues, City of Makati or send it to Fax 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

ROTC should be made mandatory

I READ WITH INTEREST THE INTENTION of Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. for the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to refurbish the former barracks of the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) locations (SB).

The bill would encourage students to voluntarily join the ROTC program. In the proposed bill, the university explained, colleges and universities would give free education to students joining the ROTC, in exchange for an eight-year service in the military immediately after their graduation.

Personally, I would recommend the revival of ROTC as part of the school curriculum, not as an option. Female students would undergo the same military drill, taking into consideration the female sex's limitations when it comes to military drill.

During World War II, especially in the Liberation phase, I was able to use my ROTC experience and expertise when I served some effectively to the efforts to liberate Leyte, especially the town of Isnad and Pinay (not yet a city then).

—LEDUA DELROSARIO,
Binakayan, Kawit, Cavite

Open pit mining destroying Aroroy

A 220+-HECTARE OPEN PIT MINING site displaced thousands of Aroroy (Masbate) residents and has caused untold destruction to the environment. The residents' lives held valiant and even barricaded the area, but the military and police would hasten them.

To extract all the gold and silver it can from the rich land of Aroroy, a mining firm has taken away the lives and livelihood of people. What is worse, if not stopped now the open pit mining operation will last up to 2032, leaving the local residents with nothing but barren soil. This environment comes from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

We are not against mining per se, but open pit mining is the most destructive type of mining and we are hoping that it be stopped not just in Aroroy but in other areas as well before it is too late. Open pit mining will eventually cause landslides and flash floods, not to mention that it has wiped out thousands of trees.

We hope that the local government, as well as the Senate, will put a stop to this destructive practice to save the environment and the lives of the residents.

—FERMIN S. FERRIOLS,
external vice president of the board of trustees,
Bangat-anon Bikol,
pangatnanonbikol@yahoo.com

First Spanish landing in Bicol not in Batangas

HERE ARE SOME COMMENTS ON DANIEL Dizon's letter "Replicas unlikely done in Batangas 1542" (Inquirer, 3/14/09):

Based on primary and secondary documentary evidence:

1. It is true that the earliest Spanish landing in Luzon happened only in 1569.

2. But it was not the Spanish forces led by Martín de Goiti and Juan de Salcedo, coming from Panay, that first landed in Luzon.

3. The Spaniards who first set foot in Luzon was the missionary expedition of Capt. Luis Enríquez de Guzman and Augustinian Fray Alonso Jiménez. They were dispatched by Legaspi from Panay Island in Bohol in the province of Camarines. ("Bicol Region"), to preach Christianity.

4. When they reached the ancient trading port of Bulan, situated near or at the mouth of Quinga River in Magallanes, Sorsogon, they found the place thickly populated. Then, they caused the construction of a small chapel where Fray Jiménez held the first Catholic Mass in Luzon in July 1569 and baptized many natives and chiefs ("bautizo a muchos indios y principales").

—ROGERIO R. ESCOBAL,
2489 San Jose St.,
San Juan River, Sorsogon City

E-mail: p_jcruz@philnews.com.ph Website: www.inquirer.net/nation

Across the NATION

Assistant Editor Tony Sargento

Layoffs, hiring in Cavite ecozones

PADDLE FUN
Tourists enjoy kayaking at the Hundred Islands in Alaminos City.

ROSARIO, CAVITE—WHILE DOZENS OF WORKERS are losing jobs at the Cavite Economic Zone Authority (CEZA), hundreds are going to be hired soon as more investors are coming in, according to CEZA authorities.

Teresa Pangs, CEZA administrator, said while two companies will close at the export zone, five are opening soon.

Pangs, however, refused to identify the two firms that would close and the five ones that will open as their owners requested that their companies not be identified in the meantime.

The two companies planning to shut down between April and May will displace 162 workers while the five new projects that will soon be approved will hire at least 1,000 workers, he added.

Pangs said companies inside CEZA are currently employing 61,000 workers, which could increase in the coming months.

He said the CEZA's official figures on laid-off workers and companies imposing reduced work hours do not tally with data gathered by the Cavite Workers' Assistance Center (WAC).

"We suspect the data that WAC has garnered, but not official figures are far below what they have," Pangs said.

He reported that 1,688 workers were laid off from January to March this year.

"The temporary work adjustments, like the no-overtime policy, only serve as a response of companies to the global financial crisis. It is better than shutting down the companies, and these adjustments are not permanent," Pangs said.

He said 11,896 workers had to cope with reduced work hours as foreign investors pay fewer January to March.

Concerned women in Cavite, known to be a location of a number of industrial parks housing export-oriented companies, convened on Sunday to discuss how to prevent massive job losses.

The WAC, a nongovernmental organization which organized the event, presented the results of a survey conducted among workers in Cavite factories.

Laura Juntereles, WAC research committee head, said her group conducted the survey for a closer look at real labor data in economic zones.

The survey was conducted from Jan. 29 to Feb. 8 with 495 respondents from 162 factories.

Marvin Lapsiot, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Negros folk assail 47% power rate hike

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—AT LEAST 3,000 consumers of the Central Negros Electric Cooperative (CENECO) signed a petition opposing a 47-percent increase in power rates sought by the National Power Corp. and the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALMC).

The petition expressed opposition to the decision of the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) to grant Napocor a provisional power rate increase of P1.14 per kilowatt-hour (kWh), hours Jurisdiction said.

Ortiz and former Silay Councilor Romeo Lacilla represented the Negros Occidental provincial government at the ERC hearing on the proposed power rate increase held in Cebu City.

The Napocor and PSALM sought ERC approval for a power rate increase of P1.38 per kWh on basic generation charges, or an increase of 47 percent from the current rate of 2.88 per kWh in the Visayas.

While deliberating on the petition, the ERC granted Napocor the provisional power rate increase that took effect in March.

The petitioners asked ERC to deny the joint application of Napocor and PSALM for lack of merit.

They said the power rate increase sought by the two companies was also untimely in the light of the present global economic crisis.

They said the two power firms could hardly justify the proposed rate increase since they have yet to submit to the ERC their audited financial statements for 2008.

They also cited Napocor's audited income statement that showed the corporation registered a net income of P66 billion for 2008 and P142 billion for 2007.

"The application is not mainly for recovery of the generation cost but is to improve its (Napocor) financial condition, which is attributable to operational mismanagement. Such mismanagement must not be shifted to the consumers," the petition added.

Ortiz said copies of the petition-demand to ERC would be distributed to all barangay captains in Bacolod City for signature by residents and to other areas covered by Ceneco.

Army says roads, schools features of Bicol Balikatan

LEGAZPI CITY—OMG HUMANITARIAN OR civic activities, that include medical, dental and engineering services, will be held in selected barangays in three Bicol provinces during the 8th US-Philippine exercises in April.

Commodore Joel S. Babas, commander of the Naval Forces Southern Luzon (Navforsol) headquartered here, gave assurances that "there will be no military exercises."

In a forum on Tuesday, Babas sought support for the joint exercises amid opposition from radicals and religious groups.

"Let us look at the benefits that the medevals will get," he said.

Col. Abel Bernardo, commander of the 901st Infantry Brigade, also appealed for support for the exercises.

Bernardo's command has jurisdiction over Albay, Sorsogon and Masbate where the exercises will be held.

Col. Glenn Macasero, Southern Luzon Command Unified Command chief, said some P30 million will be spent by the US military for engineering work alone.

To be built are 3 kilometer farm-to-market roads in Barangay Maldong in Pio Duran, Albay and Barangay Cawayan in Bulusan, Sorsogon. Two-classroom buildings will be built in Barangay Gongson in Juban and in Barangay Bagsa in Gubat, Sorsogon.

Three water distribution concrete systems will be built in Barangay Imelda and Dapdap in Uson, Masbate.

Work on the engineering projects will start April 1 while the medical and dental missions will begin April 16 until April 20.

The engineering projects will cover 13 barangays—six in Albay, two in Sorsogon and five in Masbate, said Macasero.

Macasero said soldiers are ready to protect Philippine and US soldiers taking part in the exercises. *Eugene Nonoi, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PUBLIC BIDDING NO. 2009-003 & 2009-004

PUBLIC BIDDING NO.	NAME OF CONTRACT	ABC	DATE AND VENUE OF PRE-BID CONFERENCE
2009-003	Procurement of ABC Revenue Forms for the 3rd and 4th Quarter of 2009	Php 10,591,200.00	10 April '09
2009-004	Procurement of Stamps for Lacquer Sealing Machine for the 3rd Quarter of 2009	1,750,000.00	1 April '09

PUBLIC BIDDING NO.	DESCRIPTION	CONTRACT DURATION/ DELIVERY SCHEDULE
2009-003	The Procurement of ABC Revenue Forms for the 3rd and 4th Quarter of 2009 is intended to support of the list of various Form 19, 2000, contained in Section 2 of the BAC	The quarter – to be delivered on 01 July 2009 to 31 August '09
2009-004	The Issue for Lacquer Sealing Machine (LSM) Lead Printer Head Cleaning Kit, Lead Printer Head Cleaning Kit and Lead Printer Head Cleaning Kit	Twenty (20) Calendar Days Upon Receipt of Notice to Proceed (NTP)

The descriptions of an eligible bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, Instructions to Bidders.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using a non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) to Republic Act (RA) 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is open to Philippine citizens/entities/organizations, registered in accordance with the laws and regulations governing the practice of their respective professions and/or trades and engaged in the business of supplying the goods and services mentioned in the Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid, and who are qualified to participate in the procurement project in accordance with the provisions of the IRR of RA 9184, and other applicable laws and regulations. The procedure for the evaluation shall be in accordance with Section 37 of the Revised IRR of RA 9184. The Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall be determined in accordance with Section 37.2.3 of the Revised IRR of RA 9184. The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract without incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders. The contract shall then be awarded to the bidder whose bid has been determined to be the LCB and is within the approved budget for the contract (ABC).

Prospective bidders should have completed within the last three (3) years from the date of submission and receipt of bids, a contract similar to the Project. The bidder must submit a valid and current Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) License and its updated Class "AAA" category.

Interested bidders may obtain further information from BIR's Procurement Group, Bureau of Internal Revenue, 4th Floor, BIR Building, Diliman, Quezon City and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below during office hours from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00) for the Bidding Documents.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue will hold a Pre-bid Conference open to all interested parties at the 4th Executive Conference Room, BIR-NHQ, Diliman, Quezon City at:

PUBLIC BIDDING NO.	PRE-BID CONFERENCE	TIME
2009-003 to 005	April 1, 2009	1:30 p.m.

Bids and negotiated agreements must be delivered to the address below on or before:

PUBLIC BIDDING NO.	DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF BIDS	TIME
2009-003 to 005	April 10, 2009	1:00 p.m.

All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security which shall be valid for one hundred twenty (120) calendar days from the date of the opening of bids in any of the following forms:

Form of Security	Minimum Amount in % of the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to be Bid
1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check, bank draft or manager's check of equal	One percent (1%)
2. Bank Guarantee	One and a half percent (1.5%)
3. Surety Bond	One and a half percent (1.5%)

Note: Callable on demand

Late bids shall not be accepted.

All opening shall be in the Conference Room on the 4th Floor, Training Room, Bureau of Internal Revenue, NHQ, Diliman, Quezon City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the time and address below.

PUBLIC BIDDING NO.	DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF BIDS	TIME
2009-003 to 005	April 10, 2009	1:30 p.m.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue reserves the right to pre-qualify contractors or consultants to submit bids for any equipment procured in the implementation of this Law. The BIR also reserves the right to reject any or all bids, declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract without incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue reserves the right to postpone or cancel any bid, in which the Bidding Documents are issued, at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Bureau of Internal Revenue
Attn: Jerrys A. Rubio
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee
Legal Service
Bureau of Internal Revenue
4th Floor, BIR National Office Building
Diliman, Quezon City
Telefax No.: 929-6626

(Sgd.) JAIME H. YEE, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Internal Revenue
Chairman, Legal Service
Bureau of Internal Revenue
4th Floor, BIR National Office Building
Diliman, Quezon City

Rev. 01-2005

Supreme Court of the Philippines
Judicial and Bar Council
Manila

ANNOUNCEMENT

Conformably with Section 1, Rule 7 of the Rules of the Judicial and Bar Council (JBC-009), as amended, the JBC will conduct a public interview at the Division Hearing Room, Ground Floor, New Supreme Court Building, of the following candidates for the position of **ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT** vice **Hon. Ma. Alicia A. Martinez**, whose optional retirement was approved effective 30 April 2009, and **Hon. Dante O. Tinga**, who will compulsorily retire on 11 May 2009:

11 May 2009 (Monday)
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
1. ALBANO, SO VINCENT S.
2. AYSON, RUBEN C.
3. BAUTISTA, LOWELL R.

15 May 2009 (Tuesday)
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
7. HERNANDEZ, JOSE R.
8. LUTEA, RAPHAEL PERPETUO M.
9. MANALASTAS, JESUS M.

20 May 2009 (Wednesday)
8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
1. TANG, AMPARO CABOTAJE

The following are also candidates for the said position but were already interviewed in November and December 2008, and February 2009:

1. **ABAD**, ROBERTO A.
2. **ABDULWAHID**, HAKIM S.
3. **ACOSTA**, ERNESTO D.
4. **BERSAMIN**, LUCAS P.
5. **BUNAG**, JOSE MARIO C.
6. **DEL CASTILLO**, MARIANO C.
7. **DEVANADERA**, AGNES VST
8. **DIMAAMPAO**, JAFAR B.
9. **ENRIQUEZ**, JUAN JR. G.
10. **FERNANDO**, REMEDIOS SALAZAR
11. **HORMACHUELOS**, PORFIA ALIBI
12. **REYES**, ANDRES JR.B.
13. **ROBLES**, RODOLFO G.
14. **SALONGA**, JOSEFINA GUEVARA
15. **SANDOVAL**, EDILBERTO G.
16. **SARDAS**, PABLITO V.
17. **TOLENTINO**, ANNA DOMINIQUE COSCOLLUELA
18. **VILLANUEVA**, CESAR L.
19. **VILLARAMA**, MARTIN JR., S.
20. **VILLAREAL**, FRANCISCO JR., H.

The JBC also announces that the following are applicants for judgeship positions:

REGIONAL TRIAL COURT (RTC)- (NCJR), VALENZUELA CITY (Br. 269 & 270): BUENO, Sonia A. **(REGION IV ANTIPOLO CITY, RIZAL (Br.71)**: GALIT, Reydeen U. **(REGION VIII TACLOBAN CITY, LEYTE (Br.8)**:VISMAN, Robert S.

METROPOLITAN TRIAL COURT (METC), (NCJR), MAKATI CITY (Br.61): AGAS, Rhodelyn M.; **ASBAGO**, Solaro C.; **AGAMA**, Marlyn M.; **ALCALA**, Carlo Martin R.; **AZUCENA**, Rodolfo Jr. P.; **BAES**, Sheilah L.; **BALAGAT-FELICEN**, Adelia A.; **BALITIAN**, Noemi J.; **BARING-UY**, Pamela A.; **BAYSA**, Andrew H.; **BENABAYE**, Raul R.;**BRIONES**, Stefanie Ann H.; **BRUNO**, Ruby R.; **BUENALUZ**, Hector Jr. De.; **BUSTAMANTE**, Manuel R.; **CABILES**, Bernardino L.; **CAISE**, Rowena Ester G.; **CALINA**, Geryn P.; **CAMONGOL**, Reynaldo M.; **CASTELO**, Ruth S.; **CORTES**, Jo Marie C.; **CRUZ**, Elvin R.; **DACANAY**, Corazon T.; **DARO**, Aileen Liza B.; **DE RAMOS**, Maria Angelica P.; **DELA ROSA**, Jose Lorenzo R.; **DIMAYUGYAO**, Erwin Y.; **DIZON**, Marben S.; **DOCENA**, Zaldy B.; **DOMAGO**, Maribel A.; **DUNUAN**, Larry B.; **ESGUERRA**, Caroline Ed.; **ESPIRITU**, Rio T.; **ESTORNINOS**, Flerisa M.; **FLORES**, Elsa S.; **FRANCISCO**, Evangeline M.; **GARMA**, Aileen S.; **GRAVINO**, Nida T.; **HILARIO**, Mary Catherine P.; **INOVEJAS**, Philgen Noel S.; **JALUCIAN**, Caroline R.; **LAGASCA**, Flordeliza R.; **LIM**, Antonio Jr. T.; **LOY**, Salvador A.; **MACAPAGAL**, Arnel D.; **MACITURO**, Antonina C.; **MANGUIAT**, Fatima D.; **MARISTAZA**, Romulo R.; **MEER**, Phoevie C.; **MENDINGUITO**, Norma Casandra A.; **MIGUEL**, J. Ernan Ernest R.; **MONTESA**, Jacob II M.; **MORALES**, Barbara A.; **MUEGO**, Josefina F.; **ORETA**, Maria Antonetta G.; **ORO**, Lualen D.; **ORTIZ**, Jose Jr. R.; **PAMINTUAN**, Ricardo T.; **PERICO**, Jerry C.; **POSO**, Romeo T.; **QUERUBIN**, Estrella S.; **QUINTANO**, Ireneo M.; **RAFIA**, Dennis J.; **RAGA**, Libertad R.; **RICALDE**, Tomas Jr. T.; **RODOLFO**, Juan T.; **ROMANO**, Ma. Aurora S.; **ROMAGUIN**, Teresa Kay Jr. D.; **SAMPAGA**, Maria Lolibel S.; **SAMSON**, Robert Neron B.; **SARMIENTO**, Sinforoso Jr. M.; **SINTAY**, Rolinda M.; **TOLENTINO**, Ma. Maya Bon M.; **UY**, Dante B.; **UY**, William T.; **VEDAÑA**, Joel B.; **VERMUDO**, Bonaparte Jr. S.; **VICERRA**, Rolando V.; **VILLEGAS**, Mary Antonette P.; **VITO CRUZ**, Josephine N.; **YU**, Elsa S.; **PASAY CITY (Br.47)**: **ALFONSO**, Alfonso P.; **BAES**, Sheilah L.; **BALAGAT-FELICEN**, Adelia A.; **BALMED**, Jose Jr. M.; **BATARA**, Jenny Edmund G.; **BAYSA**, Andrew S.; **BECHIRA**, Gina A.; **BIMBO**, Eva Maria M.; **BUSTAMANTE**, Manuel R.; **CEDEÑERA**, Maria Cheryl L.; **CORPUZ**, John Patrick Y.; **CRUZ**, Elvin R.;**DAGALOS**, Nestor M.; **DIZON**, Esmeralda S.; **DIZON**, Marben S.; **DOCENA**, Zaldy B.; **EVANGELISTA**, Reinnel D.; **FLOR**, Paul A.; **FLORES**, Elsa S.; **GALVAN**, Roland B.; **GARMA**, Aileen S.; **GRAVINO**, Nida T.; **JAGCIAN**, Carolina R.; **LLANASARES**, Lyn L.; **MACABABBAD**, Noorsi S.; **MACAPAGAL**, Arnel D.; **MACARAEG**, Donald R.; **MARCOS**, Dante Angel C.; **MORALES**, Barbara A.; **MUEGO**, Josefina F.; **NOGUEZA**, Lemuel E.; **ORETA**, Maria Antonetta G.; **ORTIZ**, Jose Jr. R.; **PAGALILAUAN**, Shirley M.; **PAJARON**, Katherine L.; **POSO**, Romeo S.; **QUINTANO**, Ireneo M.; **RICALDE**, Tomas Jr. T.; **ROQUILLO**, Anatalion C.; **SAGADAL**, Omar L.; **SALOMON**, Francisco L.; **SAMPAGA**, Maria Lolibel S.;**SAN GASPAR**, Juliet M.; **SARMIENTO**, Sinforoso Jr. M.; **SINTAY**, Rolinda M.; **TAN**, Deborah Maria C.; **UY**, Dante B.; **UY**, William T.; **VERMUDEZ**, Eleuterio A.; **VILLANUEVA**, Virgilio M.; **VILLEGAS**, Mary Antonette Y.; **YEE**, Caridad V.;

MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT IN CITIES (MTCC)-(REGION III) SAN FERNANDO CITY, PAMPANGA (BR.1) ARAO, Melvin J.; **ASISELA**, Dennis F.; **ANTERO**, Rogelio D.; **ANTONIO**, Hazel L.; **APARAS**, Jay C.; **BARING-UY**, Pamela A.; **CALINA**, Geryn P.; **CORPUZ**, Carlito C.; **DAMIAN**, Noel Darren C.; **DE GUZMAN**, Calogie Jr. L.; **DE LA CRUZ**, Rene M.; **DOMINGO**, Richard T.; **GARCIA**, Oliver S.; **GONZALES**, Sunerie D.; **INOVEJAS**, Philgen Noel S.; **JAVIER**, Peter John U.; **LEE**, Evelyn P.; **MANGENTIS**, Job M.; **MOBILIDAS**, Arturo V.; **PABITTAN**, Mary Jean C.; **PEIG**, Nancy D.; **PERICO**, Jerry C.; **RAÑOLA**, Juan Jr. G.; **REYES**, Rene T.; **ROMANO**, Ireneo R.; **ROMUSTAY**, Maria G.; **SERVINO**, Francisco M.;

MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT (MTC)-(REGION III) GUIMBA, NUEVA ECIJA: PAYNOR, Emmanuel S.; **SALMO**, Ron F.; **SANTOS**, Warner A.; **SANTOS**, Rodrigo M.; **WEE**, Edith Cynthia R.

MUNICIPAL CIRCUIT TRIAL COURT (MCTC)- (REGION I) MAPANDAN-ANGIO/KEL-SANTA & STA. CRUZ-STA LUCIA, ILOCOS SUR: INOVEJAS, Philgen Noel S. **(REGION III) IBAÑA AURORA-DIPACULAO, AURORA**: REYALA, Jocelyn P.; **REYES**, Julieta I.; **SINGSON**, Christopher T.; **STO. TOMAS-BINALIN, PAMPANGA**: ARANAS, Joy C. **DE GUZMAN**, Calogie Jr. L.; **MALIG**, Robert Alexandre R.; **QUINTANO**, Ireneo M.; **REYES**, Rene E.; **RODRIGUERA**, Nida G.;

The public may submit sworn complaint, written report, or opposition against any of the aforesaid candidates for judicial positions in the Supreme Court and lower courts **not later than 7 APRIL 2009 (Tuesday)** to the JBC Secretariat.

All applicants for judicial positions must submit to the JBC ASAP via fax, mail or e-mail their updated JBC Form 1 (Revised September 2007), proof of Filipino citizenship, and 2008 Disbursement, NBI and Police Clearances, as well as the other requirements before the date scheduled for their interview. **Those who fail to submit the necessary requirements shall neither be interviewed nor considered for nomination.**

24 March 2009

MA. LUISA D. VILLARAMA
Clerk of Court & JBC
Ex Officio Secretary

INQUIRER
Southern Luzon

Cebu Jun Bandayrel
Areas Chief Ronnie G. Solenisen

Kawakawa Hill offers unique Way of the Cross

THIS Lenten season, a Way of the Cross is being held every Friday at 4 p.m. in Kawakawa Hill in Calitcha-sita Village, Barangay Tuburan, Ligao City

By Joanna Luz Baños
Ligao City

FILIPINOS HAVE THEIR own unique ways of spending the Lenten season, especially Holy Week. They go to churches, fast, repent, make sacrifices and pray.

The observance is widely viewed, however, that an opportunity has not been for family bonding or going on a retreat and relax.

To satisfy both purposes, a prominent site of Ligao City opened the 2.56-meter Kawakawa Hill to Calitcha-sita Village, Barangay Tuburan, as a scenic and religious destination in Albay. The place is 1.5 kilometers from the Maharlika Highway or a 30-minute drive northwest of Legazpi City.

Kawakawa looks like any other hill from afar. Its assignments can be seen only from its top.

Former Gov. Fernando Gonzalez, who is now busy in commodities development, owned the property and the hill used to be called "Isi-isi," a Ligao term for "tagging" or "depressed," which literally describes the site-factors crisscross on top.

People who have climbed the hill describe the scene as a "huge antiphotocopy." Some compare it to "half a coconut," but Gonzalez simply describes it as the "hill without a hilltop."

Because the scene also looks like a "fossa" or native cauldron, tourists eventually named it "Kawakawa."

Reasons

Thousands of people have already walked the sweeping 500-meter path to the cross. A number of events have been held there since last year.

Gonzalez, who bought the hill from different owners, said his immediate reasons was to "maintain its natural state and preserve the environment."

"I had no hay in order to preserve it," he said.

He opened Kawakawa to the public because he wanted to give them "a place where they can go and not spend money."

Those who want to improve their health can go to the hill and exercise, he said. So himself walks at least once a day up the hill that he calls the "Lung of Ligao," where one can breathe fresh air.

"Those who have problems can come up here and spend some moments of tranquility and refresh their minds," he said.

"When you are up here, perusing multi-layered problems or hate (the problem down there seems small)," he added.

The top offers a breathtaking view of the city and its neighboring towns, sprawling fields and green mountains.

A Boy Scouts of the Philippines Eagle Scout Achievements Group and Facilities, a volunteer could and leaves for him can also be found in the cross.

Natural

Gonzalez said the hill was a way to promote agriculture and the environment. "We promote diversity. Depleted quality mountain river, principals and vegetables," he said.

Eight regular members motivate and protect the walkway ramp and carriages.

Although the park is lighted, Gonzalez encourages everyone to leave when it's already dark.

Gonzalez said the challenge of the Kawakawa is "to come up, walk up and look at it."

"If you ride into it, you can ride into an hill and it's all the same," he said.

"When you get up here (Kawakawa), you feel that you have accomplished the challenge, you have a sense of conquest and feel that it's all worthwhile," he said.

Way of the Cross

About four years ago, Gonzalez, who is also a former mayor of Ligao, donated an 800-square-meter lot at the foot of the hill to the Diocese of Legazpi.

The congregation plans to build a Divine Mercy shrine soon.

"The seats added if they could put Stations of the Cross. I recommended them," he said.

According to Sister Arcangela, her group was able to put up and finance the life-size images of the Stations of the Cross with the help of kindhearted and generous people here and abroad.

This Lenten season, a Way of the Cross has been held every Friday at 4 p.m.

The commencement of the Way of the Cross, designed and conceptualized by a sculptor from Paete town in Laguna started late last year. The first eight stations can be seen along the walkway, while the remaining six were installed around the 800-meter concrete ring.

Masked Dunja and her class children were among those who participated in the religious traditions.

"This is an unforgettable experience for me. After praying at each station, I felt united with the Lord and my life as a Christian is fulfilled," she said.

Grecia's eldest daughter Lizzie-Ann Marie said she felt blessed after joining the Way of the Cross. "I felt that God is so close and wishes my wish," she said.

First-time climber Rose Inbongbong, 73, said she never got tired and learned life very fit, strong and healthy after enduring and praying at the same time.

New version

According to Sister Arcangela, the Way of the Cross in Kawakawa is unique and different from those found in churches.

She said the Agony in the Garden is no longer the first station because it was replaced by the Last Supper, and the last station is the Sacrament.

The Second Fall of Jesus and Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus stations were removed.

The Way of the Cross will be inaugurated at 4 p.m. on March 24.

With a report from Michael B. Jamolon, contributor

THE SIX-HECTARE scenic set-up of the Kawakawa Hill in Calitcha-sita Village, Barangay Tuburan, Ligao City.

Pacquiao under age for Senate

THE SCRIBES COVERING THE SPORTS beat are no longer interested in getting to the bottom of the latest Manny Pacquiao controversy.

Seated in a round table during the press conference hosted by GMA 7 last Friday they were just on

Several days after scuffles involving the boxing icon, Solar Sports and MBA-CBN were seen

Manny had positively apologized to Solar and to media partner GMA 7 during an hour phone call. He admitted he had committed a grievous mistake, like most humans are wont to do.

Tabloid stories neighborhood, tiffs] ex-mercenaries, double-talk media assaults, and sensitive or else vigorous bans kahapon (his ultimate mistakes, we're not finished; this word happens again, because I'm sworn now!" he said.

Everyone was quick to forgive. Like the biblical prodigal son, Manny was welcomed back to the folds told with open arms.

"Let's put everything behind us. I'm just glad that Manny saw the light and is realizing his commitment," said Solar Sports chair Wilfred Steng.

In their emergency meeting held to keep tight Los Angeles appointees last Tuesday (Manila time), Manny's camp of Willie Revillame and Solar CEO Peter Chambong that he's sticking with Solar "all the way" from here on.

While he admitted to being taxed and to having left for a most unwanted ride Manny maintained that the riders announcing he was moving all his fights to MBA-CBN was unsubstantiated.

"Any umpire, dahilan [we pay expensive upon or may violation or contract ang if his agreement was they would close the record of their proof that there's a minimum violation by] Solar," he said. "Ang sang part, sabihin na hindi sana pag nagpapayuhan and without my go-signal. Di bale dapat yun (They refused it even if there was nothing present yet and without my go-signal)."

Whether he was telling the truth or not, people will always believe what and who they want to believe. It's human nature.

The trolley never ceased by Manny that his is entitled to the May 2 fight in Las Vegas against Ritzy Ricky Hatton was not adversely affected by the recent brouhaha.

Meanwhile, GMA chair and CEO Felipe Gozon announced that in addition to Manny's two remote shows, "Daboy" and "Daya Sawsaw," more projects are forthcoming. Among them is a show, a drama series, boxing flicks documents and sex even abroad.

Now where did I hear those plans for a Pacquiao reality show, starring with his sending for the Hatton fight? I thought GMA would make that announcement.

I received an e-mail from literary Nicandro "Nonoy" Molinillard, son of the country's top election lawyers and also one of the godchildren of Queen Elizabeth Pangalos. Excerpts of his letter:

Re: Your March 22, 2009 column that "Nonoy Pangalos may be minimum of running for a seat in the lower house of Congress."

Under Section 3, Art. 16 of the 1987 Constitution, a senator must be at least 35 years old age "on the day of his election." While Manny Pacquiao will be a new senator if he runs for the senate in 2010, the problem is he would only be 32 years old in 2010, so he'd be three years short of the 35 years old age requirement for a senator.

Incidentally, when we say "Congress" it refers to two houses of Congress—the House of the Senate and the House of Representatives. So it would be more precise to say that Manny would be running as member of the House of Representatives or would be running for Congressman or Representative instead of running for a seat in "Congress."

By the way, since I think Manny Pacquiao, I too am an avid fan of Muhammad Ali dating back to the days when he was still known as Cassius Clay. Proof—suddenly while, I think I am the only one in the "whole world" who had been born with left hooks of an old saying back I have considering his fights dating back to the 60's when he was still known as Cassius Clay. I was able to score him in 1975 before the "Thrilla in Manila" fight between Ali and Joe Frazier. Ali ended up the decision by signed Cassius career flippings with his glove on it. I stayed two solid hours in his hotel suite at the Hilton Hotel (now Westin Hotel Center) where he received me [nice and because I am an accredited member of the golden ruling his Sous Rites (see Rotarian, YES or CS at that time).

Who does Muhammad think is the greatest Filipino boxer of all time?

"Both Pacio and Manny Pacquiao have duly respective greatness in Philippine boxing. While Pacio is the greatest Filipino boxer in the 20th century, Pacquiao is the greatest in his time. Both have their own skills and talents [and] each of them have brought glory and honor to their country," he said.

Pacman in tip-top shape

MANNY PACQUIAO POSES a tough sparring partner in lightweight prospect Gerbacio Ibarra, who engaged the Filipino star in an eye-catching six-round session yesterday at the Wild Card gym.

Tapped by Pacquiao's trainer Freddie Roach because of the similarity in his fighting style to British brawler Ricky Hatton, Ibarrillos constantly pressured Pacquiao, who never slipped and fell to the canvas in the third round as he tried to evade an Ibarrillos attack. Gabriel Montoya of mandatorio.com reported.

"Ibarrillos] is more of a Ricky Hatton type of style than Jorge Linares," Roach said. Linares sparred with Pacquiao last week.

Roach said Pacquiao is looking sharp in training with five weeks to go before the May 2 bout.

"He [Pacquiao] is looking really well. We've got the game plan all worked out and I'm really happy with where he is at."

Pacquiao, who was voted by the Boxing Writers Association of America as its fighter of the year for 2008, was 147 pounds, eight-tot weights as of last Saturday, the website reported.

Roach, also named Trainer of the Year, also boldly predicted that Pacquiao will finish off Hatton in the first three rounds.

"We're going to knock him out in three rounds," Roach said. "I told Manny that if it goes past three rounds, I'd be mad at him."

Roach also dismissed claims of trainer Floyd Mayweather Jr. that the British "Hitman" will morph into a defensively-proficient boxer once fight night.

"Mayweather is going to try and make him a boxer because he's afraid. He's just trying to make damage someone at this late stage of their career," Roach said. "I think the best way for Ricky Hatton to fight this fight is to fight like he does. If he tries to box, Manny, he'll get killed."

But Hatton has also expressed delight at the way his camp has been going. He is set to leave for Las Vegas, where he will train until the fight.

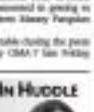
"We are very halfway through the training camp, there are six weeks to go and I think a lot of fighters would be happy with my speed, sharpness and timing come fight night," said Hatton, who will be defending his IBO 140-lbs title, told ESPN Sport.

"I'm happy with the stage I am at but I just know my boxing ability, combination punches, jabbing and head movement is going to get us much better."

Cedrik F. Topas

TOP BALL Chicago Bulls guard Eric Hinrich (front) gets a step ahead of the Detroit Pistons' Will Bynum in search for possession. Hinrich helped the Bulls to a 99-91 victory over the Pistons. In other games, it was LA Lakers (W...) Oklahoma City (W...) San Antonio (...) Golden State (...) Utah (W...) Houston (...)

In Huddle



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Per DTI – NCR Permit No. A2 – 0101 Series of 2009

2 Illam teams gain finals

TAKO Ishibashi of Manila 1 slides home safely.

GAME TODAY
(Lee O'Neil)

9 a.m. — Bangkok vs. Manila 1 (Junior Division)
10:30 a.m. — Manila 2 vs. Manila 1 (senior boys)
12 n.n. — Perth vs. Jakarta (senior boys)
2 p.m. — Victoria vs. Manila 2 (senior girls)
(Rizal Park)
9 a.m. — Bangkok vs. Manila 2 (senior boys)
11 a.m. — Perth vs. Jakarta (senior boys)
2 p.m. — Victoria vs. Manila 1 (senior girls)

By Marc Anthony Reyes

TWO TEAMS FROM THE INTERNational Little League Association of Manila and Jakarta, Indonesia, had the finals all but overwhelming their opponents here in yesterday's semifinals of the 2009 Southeast Asian Youth Baseball and Softball Tournament.

Manila 1, bolstered by the blazing bats of Jun Diaz and Chilton Domingo, thumped Manila 2, 23-4, to make it to the girls major softball division at the Ateneo High School field.

With a .700 batting average Diaz, heroine during their 14-13 squeaker over North Luzon, also starred with one RBI in each of the first two frames, including a triple in the second which saw the Manilans scoring five runs for an 11-5 advantage.

But it was Domingo, batting with a .800 average, who took over in the pivotal fourth inning, hammering a two-RBI single that sent home Kit Ginoino and DC Ursal—who had singled and doubled respectively earlier in the inning.

Domingo's hit came with two outs and served as an impetus for Illam's Tokio A to go for the jugular.

Explosive inning

Dionne Uno soon scored Domingo with a single to the left, before Ariel Ocampo's single sent her and run-other Antonio to complete an explosive six-run inning.

Manila 2 wasn't able to answer back in the top of the fifth to bow out of contention. The other semis match between Perth and Singapore was still being played.

At the other side of the Rizal field, Manila Merrell Perth, 14-5, to win bragging rights for boys senior division championship on Saturday.

Miggy Santos hit a three-run homer in the fifth inning to ignite a six-run frame that included two other homers from Paolo Mallari and Angelo Aguerra.

Aguerra came through with his RBI, aside from slamming two other homers, while Antonio and Renzo Ramos each helped cop with 2 RBIs.

Earlier in the Game 3 field, Manila 2 whipped Perth, 7-4, for its fourth victory in the boys minor, while Bangkok edged Perth (7-6) and Singapore downed Jakarta (16-4).

The week-long event, now on its fourth staging, is sponsored by Interstar, Milner Sports, Tokyo Tokyo, BFC, Gatorade, Pepsi, Philsport Bank, Rio Linda Realty, STI College, Knights Capital, Oceanic Insurance, Liberty Telecom, Adidas, Alaska Milk, 98.5 Barilito Jewellers and HLOC.

So overwhelms Gomez, takes Battle of GMs lead

SO: Undefeated

GOMEZ: Resigned

By Roy Luarca

EASTERN CITY—SO IN FORM PESSLEY SO trounced fellow Grandmaster John Paul Gomez yesterday to grab the sole lead in the Battle of Grandmasters at the Dapitan City Resort Hotel.

Handling white with promise, he gained tempo on their normal duel and was on the verge of scoring a pawn up when Gomez resigned after 25 moves of a French Defense.

The 15-year-old So, the opening round sequence of 2200 Bonus system "Berg" Villanueva, then soars to seven to 6.0 points under the novel scoring system being applied in the 11-round tournament. A win is worth 2.0 points, a draw 1.0 and a loss 0. If a stalemate occurs, the player who maintains his opponent gets 1.5 points while the stalemated player receives 0.5 point.

The bespectacled Gomez, highest Filipino scorer in the 2008 Dresden Chess Olympiad, remained at 2.0 points.

Trailing So at 3.0 points were Grandmaster Rogelio "Barp" Antonio and International Master Richard Bitoon, who both settled for draws yesterday.

Antonio downed IM John Caradine Andrews Bandar night before being forced to a draw by IM Rolando Nolte after 37 moves of an Alekhine Defense.

Bitoon appeared to a truce with Indians after 30 moves of a Sicilian Defense.

Steaming from his loss to So, Villanueva subdued IM Ronald Dalikit after 36 moves of a Slav Defense to climb to 2.0 points to the company of GM Eugene Torre, Gomez, GM Darwin Layla and Nolte.

In the women's division, Women National Master Jan Jenilyn Fronda mauled Ita's 6.0 points with a victory over WNM Judy Ann Jose after 63 moves of a Nimzowitsch Defense.

Lacking behind Fronda at 5.0 points are Women Fide Masters and sisters Shirelle and Sherily Cua.

UB honors chess mover 'Campo'

FORMER INTERNATIONAL Chess Federation (Fide) president Florencio Campomanes was conferred the degree of Doctor of Humanities (honoris causa) by the University of Baguio during its commencement exercises recently.

Campomanes made Baguio his favored city in the 1970s and '80s when he held several international chess tournaments there.

Baguio became a byword in international sports the almost 100 days in 1978 when it hosted the classic World Championship confrontation between the Soviet Union's mainly Basque and Russian emigre Viktor Korchnoi of the Netherlands.

Campomanes is also credited with guiding the early careers of such Filipino chess stars like Grandmasters Eugene Torre and Rogendo Balinas and International Masters Rodolfo Tan Cardoso and Renato Naranja.

"I have always considered as the crew that the Filipino is capable of great deeds and great achievements," Campomanes, who was also honored with the position honorary president for life by the Fide in recognition of his immense contribution to the game of chess, told the graduates.

In his tribute to Campomanes, the university cited his "brilliant, dynamic leadership and improvises, solid administrative in the field of sports."

University of Baguio officials led by president Herminio C. Bautista and VP for academic affairs Dr. Veronica S. Garcia conferred the honorary degree on Campomanes. Del G. Mekendrix

AGAMOS Fide president Florencio Campomanes (second from right) receives his honorary degree from University of Baguio officials led by president Herminio C. Bautista and VP for academic affairs Dr. Veronica S. Garcia.

You care for Manny Pacquiao?

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

THREE POINT ONE? THREE MORE? DAY Filipinos worthy of representing the country in the world's hall of noble people: Carlos P. Romulo, Ceci Aquino and Manny Pacquiao.

Romulo was known behind for spontaneous Indy Salud, an accomplished lawyer and sharp snake of character.

The other day Salud, who crafted the commissions and by-laws of the World Boxing Council to see that engagement's founding secretary-general, said Pacquiao was hardly noble in his dealings with the television host-week he had originally announced as an his fights, mainly the near big one against Ricky Hatton in May.

But Salud said it's still worth keeping Pacquiao in the list of truly noble people for the "glory he has brought to our country with his boxing prowess."

* * *

Just the same, Salud said Pacquiao may have to be assessed a demerit after he failed to honor his unwritten pact with the Filipino people.

Sin, this part was not like the one which Pacquiao had tricked his dishonest last week.

This moment says that, as a national measure, Pacquiao has to show to prove his character and the image of pure Filipinos, which he represents in the international stage.

For the record, Pacquiao, has since unwittingly removed the pact he had originally made with Salud Sports.

He had also asked Krug to come and wait, in fact, ready to be forgiven.

* * *

However, in another selfish twist, Pacquiao finds himself more.

Pacquiao has been ordered by the Games and Amusements Board (GAB) to explain why he has not yet signed the contract for his March 28 fight against Hatton.

Pacquiao's camp has been insisting that the fight will be held in Las Vegas, Nevada, while GAB wants the fight to be held in the Philippines

Editor Teddyvic S. Melendrez • Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ochoa

SPORTS

SIZE does matter for Jai Lewis (right) as he helps Rain or Shine hammer Wynne Arboleda and Burger King

Beermen whip Kings, keep solo 'Fiesta' lead

MITSUBISHI LANCER CHAMPIONSHIP Sidelights

The 15th staging of the Mitsubishi Lancer ITF Junior Championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center attracted participation from 20 nations. The annual tournament, which started as a mere group 5 event in 1991, has grown and is widely considered as a steppingstone of future stars in the men's and women's tennis circuits. This year alone, the top 10 seeds in the boys' singles are in the top 100 of the International Tennis Federation rankings with top seed Young Jung Chi ranked No 6. Our very own Treland Stark-winner Australian Lleyton Hewitt's doubles partner Patrick Rafter. Lleyton is ranked second with his No 11 ranking, accompanied by Andy Roddick, who is aiming to become the first Filipino to win the boys' singles crown in the Grade 1 event, the second biggest junior tennis event in the region, slotted six spots after Wimbledon's 1-2 duo of Great Britain's Matthew Ebden in the second round yesterday. Only two Filipinos were able to break the stranglehold of foreigners in the event with Jennifer Sanel and Francesca Alcantara making the last showdown at Manila Polo Club in the finals but the two ladies through an array of highly ranked teenagers in the lower parts of the NCR, two draw. Five-time winner Asia no John Ho is billed to meet No 14 seed Matteo Cicarelli of Italy in the round-of-16 assault, just like Australian Republican of Austria in the quarterfinals and 8th seed Emmanuel Mahne from Italy in the semifinals. In the upper half of the draw, standing in the way of Young are Pavel Chkhik of Canada, 13th seed Tom Barry of Ireland, 5th seed Daniel Bohs of Sweden, third seed Orlando Schulz of Germany and of course, countries. Close to the top 10 issues 9th seed Rob Nick Jefferson of New Zealand, 9th seed Jonny Sub-young of South Korea, 7th seed Alexandre Bilgic of Italy, No 10 John Richard of Ireland, 11th pick Nick Hill of New Zealand, 12th seed Jonathan Kelly-Houghton of New Zealand, No 13 David Thomson of Great Britain and 15th seed Sharma Kasamsiyagat of India. Nations represented in the netfest are Philippines, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Serbia, Singapore, South Korea, Sweden, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine and the USA.

Jai leads Painters to 4th straight win

By Mycerg R. Castillo

SAN MIGUEL EXTENDED THE MOMENTUM PBA Fiesta Cup's longest winning streak to six games last night while chalking sister squad Barangay Ginebra another tasted beating, 99-89, at the Araneta Coliseum.

Jay Washington and Dondon Hontiveros scored 19 points each and import Talmbut Freeman added 13 and 16 rebounds as the Beermen broke away in the halfway mark of the fourth period.

"It's a blessing," San Miguel coach Siot Tanquingcen told reporters later. "Everyone is stepping up. Different games, different people are stepping up."

Jay Jay Helterbrand led the Kings with 24 while import Ford Neely added 21 and 15 rebounds but Ginebra couldn't get any production outside of the two.

Ginebra, which won this tournament at the expense of Air21 last year, is now alone in the cellar with a 1-5 card.

Built like a truck but as nimble as a sports car, Jai Lewis powered Rain or Shine to a 130-112 triumph over Burger King in the first game.

"It was simple, Jai was incredible for us today" said coach Caloy Garcia of his import, who is listed at 209 lbs but could easily tip the scales at 350, after Lewis erased 40 points, plucked down 20 rebounds and had four blocks.

Lewis also showed a tremendously soft touch, making 4-of-6 triple attempts, 7-of-9 free-point tries and running just two of 10-and-one plays. He cannot miss the game making just 2-of-5 from triple territory and 14-of-25 from the stripe in his first three games.

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March 28, Doubles Finals
March 29, Singles Finals
Rizal Memorial Tennis Center, Malate, Manila

Francis Casey "Niño" Alcantara
The first Filipino to win a grand slam at the Australian Open Junior Boys doubles title.

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Top teams join Nestea volley Mindanao leg

DAGUPAN CITY—SAINT FOR THE WORD-city's team of Holy Cross of Davao College, the top three finishers here last year are pounding new partnerships when they open their bid today for $5,000 slots in the 2005 Nestea Pil Beach Volley Mindanao leg at the Tagum Beach Volley Center in Sunny Park.

John Michael Vivares will be back for defending men's champion Capitol University and will have Antonio Concepcion partner in lieu of Oscar Escobal. Runner-up University of Mindanao-Digos has a new pair in Mike Ball Hartal and Beryl Macaspac while Holy Cross has enlisted Dionnie Garcia Jr. and Allen Jay Sales.

In the women's side, 2004 champion UM Digos will open a new duo in Jenifer Carla Gonzales and Lourdilyn Carolino. Holy Cross will be bannered anew by Mylah Barasa and Aiza Asturias while Junice Arnaiz returns to Universidad de Davao with new partner Jennifer Conde.

The other teams are Mindanao State University-Tawi Tawi, MSU-Iligan, Xavier College of Southern Philippines, Mindanao Institute of Technology, Ateneo de Davao, Agusan Institute of Technology and four Manila U. Ateneo's Asuncion

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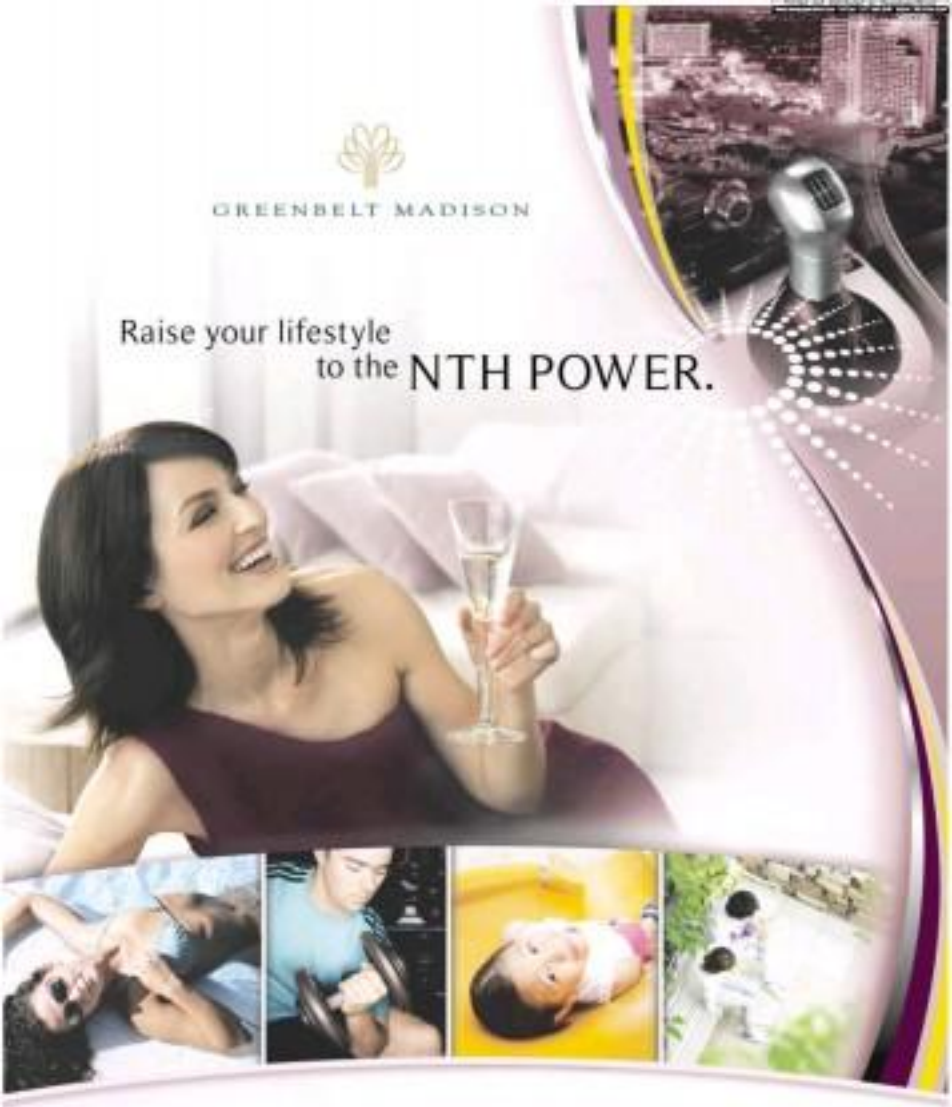

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DID YOU KNOW

THERE are more females than males (46,420 and 45,831, respectively) with registered businesses in Metro Manila in 2008, according to the Department of Trade and Industry. —Cyril L. Bonanono, Inquirer Research

Lim vows to veto measure that will amend zoning plan

Changes stance after receiving Cardinal's letter

By Erika Sauler and Gloria Paz Rogue

MANILA MAYOR ALFREDO LIM YESTERDAY said he would veto a controversial draft ordinance which sought to amend the city's zoning plan and, according to its critics, would allow the "Big 3" oil companies to continue operating the Pandacan oil depot.

"When the ordinance comes to me, I will veto it," Lim told the reporters.

The mayor earlier took a hands-off stance on Draft Ordinance 7177 which was filed by Councilor Arlene Bag. It was passed on second reading last week and was scheduled for third and final reading this week.

"I don't want to interfere in the internal affairs of the council. That would be preemptive on my part," Lim said in an interview last week.

But he apparently had a change of heart after he received a letter from Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales.

In a letter dated March 24, Rosales told Lim of his objection to the proposed ordinance which seeks to amend City Ordinances 8119 and 8027 and open the city to medium and heavy industries.

According to the cardinal, the move poses "serious environmental and health threats" to residents in the area where the Pandacan oil depot is located.

"The residents there, numbering more than 75,000, feel that there was no regard at all for their welfare and their voice in what is supposed to be a democratic process. They say that there was no consultation with them and therefore their role on the matter was not considered," Rosales said.

He asked Lim to listen to the "people of Sta. Ana" and to carefully study and evaluate the possible impact of the ordinance before it is passed on third and final reading.

"I pray that you and the council members of your city may be moved with compassion and

(04 A2)

19 kin of slain Fil-Canadian under probe

By Nancy C. Carvajal

NINETEEN RELATIVES OF A Filipino-Canadian who was shot and killed in Quezon City over the weekend were being interrogated for allegedly conspiring in murder the victim, a police official said.

Supt. Franklin Moises Mabasang, chief of the Quezon City Police District's Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit, said Ricardo Espinosa, 41, of Canoe Road, Coquitlam, British Columbia, was killed in Saturday evening over a property dispute.

"We have to investigate all the people present during the incident because nobody seems to corroborate the statement made by the victim's brother that one of their relatives shot and killed (Ricardo) Espinosa," Mabasang said.

Shot by a relative!

He added that Mario, the victim's brother, positively identified one of their cousins, Isidro Espinosa, in the gunman.

"I was at least five meters away when he shot my brother," Mario told the reporters yesterday at the QCPD headquarters.

The victim, Mabasang said, was shot five times in the neck and chest.

Isidro, who was arrested in his house in Guadalupe, Makati City yesterday morning, denied that he was the one who shot the victim.

"Why would I kill him? I have no ill feelings toward him and until I have no motive," he told the reporters in Pilipino.

Based on the police report, the victim, who was on vacation, was involved in a dispute with his relatives over the house he owned in Ramsaing, Quezon City.

The victim rented out the property but some of his relatives, who had been staying in the house for five years without paying rent, were opposed to it.

On Saturday night, a group of men knocked on the gate of the house.

When the victim asked them what they wanted, the men told him that they were there to help his relatives pack up their things in preparation for moving out of the house.

Victim mauled

However, when he opened the gate, they ganged up on him and beat him up.

A few seconds later, a gunshot rang out.

Mario said that after his brother was shot, some of their relatives came out of the house to help them.

"We are among my relatives helped us. Some of them even left (the house) immediately," he added.

Mabasang said investigators would question the 19 relatives who were inside the house when the shooting took place.

Conscience-stricken Cezar Mancao

BRIG. GEN. FIDEL LACSEN CLARIN that Malacañang granted his former subordinate, Cezar Mancao, total immunity from any and all murder charges in the twin murders of "Bubby" Dacer and Emmanuel Corbito.

In what if the Palace did convince Mancao to turn against his former boss?

Does that make Lacson less accused of the crime just because Malacañang made Mancao see the light?

However, it was not Malacañang that made Mancao turn against Lacson but Mancao's own guilty conscience.

Mancao volunteered to become a state witness to Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez who had asked for his cancellation in connection with the much-publicized abduction-murder case.

As I've said before in this space, Mancao is a good man; he just fell in with bad company.

* * *

Lacson's former driver, Reynaldo Dalmacio, said he could not recall his ex-boss ordering Mancao and former Senior Supt. Michael Ray Aquino to kill Dacer or Mancao requested by him to do his dirtywork.

Lacson should not be ecstatic because he can't use Dalmacio's statement as a defense in court.

Dalmacio is facing five murder cases that date as far back as the notorious Metrocom intelligence unit headed by Group (MISG).

Who should be cool? Believe—the comeback-striking 13-1 general of their share of the company.

The public among us may take this as gospel truth. But the Marcos martial law regime and ours are two different eras.

It appears that the "oppressed" Lopezes have debts up to their necks, with Meralco's holding company, First Philippine Holdings Inc., and subsidiary First Gen. Corp., facing maturing loans amounting to billions of pesos.

"Survival" is the word to describe the Lopezes losing their bread and butter because of the excessive rates they charge the consuming public.

I write this at the risk of incurring the ire of my daughter, Gwin, who works for Meralco. But truth must be told.

Lim vows to veto ...

From page B2

fairness on this issue and consider the welfare of our people in Pasig, Sta. Ana. They are poor and helpless in the face of affluent Davis environmental pollution, but it is their right to have clean air, water and surroundings," Rosales said.

In 2003, the Manila city council rescinded Ordinance 8027 which reclassified the division of Pinagbuhatan and Sta. Ana from an industrial to a commercial-residential zone.

Davawer and operators of businesses in the area, including the Pandacan oil depot, were consequently required to relocate their establishments within six months of the law's effectivity.

In 2008, Ordinance 8119, also known as "The Metalic Comprehensive Land Use Plan and Zoning Ordinance," was passed by the city council, giving oil companies operating the depot until 2013 to move out of the area.

The following year, the Supreme Court ordered the oil firms to relocate the depot, citing the danger posed by the facility to residents in the area in case of a terrorist attack.

Lim, meanwhile, said he was committed to implementing the court's decision, noting that he would veto the proposed ordinance because it contradicts the court's decision.

But although he could veto the measure, the city council could still overrule him by a two-thirds vote.

"They could override me if their votes will reach (three) or more. But I will do what is right," Lim told the reporters.

His statement was lauded by Vladimir Labajan of the Social Justice Society and Gerry Albert Corpuz of the militant group Piglas Bayan.

Cabajan, a resident of Pandacan, also urged the 20 councilors who voted in favor of the draft ordinance on second reading to withdraw their support "in the face of the growing opposition from all sectors of the affected community on the environmental measure."

On Target

Ramon Tulfo

ex Mancao or Ordonez, an alleged multiple murderer!

* * *

A person who used the power of government to harass or persecute others would eventually find out that the same power he used against others will be used against him. Such is the law of karma.

* * *

Meralco's Lopezes compare up-an image of a Marcos-like takeover of the electricity firm after they sold all but

MetroBriefs

Crackdown on vs cyber sex dens

THE CAUAYAN City Police have started a crackdown on Internet cafés being used as cyber sex dens after receiving a complaint from the kin of a local official who enrolled to work in one of the establishments. Chief Insp. Cherry Lou Donato of the Cauayan City Police District's criminal investigation and Detection Unit said three boys and the owner of an unidentified Internet café on Quirino Highway, Tabuguis, Cauayan City, were arrested on Sunday night during a raid. Donato said they received a complaint from a woman who said her nephew was tricked by the group to her shocked to see Pornhub, Redtube, Xvideos, Youporn and other pornographic websites. The shop, the informant said, runs a website—www.adultfriendster.com—frequented by clients abroad. She explained that the boys posted an woman and lured clients into logging on the website. "Once a client agrees and enters the site, a transaction will be done through credit card trading," she added. The boys would then upload pre-taped videos of women engaged in sexual activities. Donato said the shop owner was charged with human trafficking and was released by the police after posting bail of P200,000. —Cheryl C. Carvajal

March 27 a nonworking holiday in Las Piñas

IT WILL be a nonworking holiday tomorrow, March 27, in Las Piñas City as it celebrates its 102th foundation day and 12th year as a highly urbanized and multi-awarded city. Mayor Virgel "Nene" Aguilar said there will be no classes in public and private schools in the city on Friday. At the same time, he thanked residents for their support for the city's development programs which were cited by local and international awards-giving bodies, making Las Piñas one of the country's most multi-awarded cities in the past decade.

QC folk urged to join Earth Hour switch-off

QUEZON City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. has urged local officials and residents to turn off the lights for one hour on March 28 in observance of Earth Hour. In a letter to the officials of the different departments at city hall, Belmonte asked them to switch off the lights from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m. on that day. —Jaime Aurelio

TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Pre-Training Assessment for Applicants for Finishing Course for Call Center Agents, MCB under Pangulong Gloria Scholarship

The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority intends to apply the sum of Php 4,320,000.00 being the sum Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) for the procurement of Trail (Ds for Pre/Exam). Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.

Bidding will be conducted through public bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations, Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act No. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act No. 8182 (R.A. 7182). Only bids from bidders who passed the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the bidding documents. The bidder with the lowest calculated bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine his/her responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested bidders may obtain further information from the PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY DIVISION, 3rd Floor, TESDA Administration Building, TESDA Complex, East Service Road, South Luzon Expressway, Taguig City from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by the interested bidders from the above address and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of Fifteen Thousand Pesos Only (Php 15,000.00). The method of payment will be in the form of CASH. The bidding documents shall be received personally by the prospective bidder or his/her authorized representative.

TESDA will hold a Pre-Bid Conference to all interested parties on April 3, 2009, 2:00 p.m. at the GTTI Conference Room, Ground Floor, Learning Center, TESDA Administration Building.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before April 16, 2009, 2:00 p.m. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in any of the following form and amount:

- Cash, certified check, cashier's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit equivalent to 1% of the ABC; or
- Bank Guarantee equivalent to 1%% of the ABC; or
- Surety Bond equivalent to 2.5% of the ABC; or
- Foreign government guarantee equivalent to 100% of the ABC

Late bids shall not be accepted.

Bid opening shall be held on April 16, 2009, 2:30 p.m. at the GTTI Conference Room, Ground Floor, Learning Center, TESDA Administration Building. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

TESDA reserves the right to accept or reject any bid and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
T. S. SAMIDO
Chairman, BAC
TESDA Administration Building
East Service Road, South Superhighway
Taguig City, Metro Manila
Tel. No. : 816-7726; 893-3483; 893-6295
Telefax No. : 816-7726; 893-6295
Website : www.tesda.gov.ph

(Sgd.) T. S. SAMIDO
BAC Chairperson

2 women in shabu deal held

By Erika Sauler

THE MANILA POlice have arrested two women, one of whom was pregnant, in a buy-bust operation in Tondo.

Supt. Ernesto Tendero, chief of the Manila Police District station 1, said they conducted the operation on Tuesday after they received information about the women's drug activities.

Tendero identified the pair as Marie Grace Cruz, 24, and Abigail Tellada, 24, who is also five months pregnant.

The police seized Cruz as the head of a cache of shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) in the pawnshop on Ocrisia Street in Pritil, Tondo.

They later found two more sachets of the drug in her possession. Another sachet was seized from Tellada.

Police said the drugs seized from the pair were valued at P1,000.

Tendero said they would file charges of selling illegal drugs against Cruz and possession of illegal drugs against her companion.

"It's a pity that she's (Tellada) using drugs even though she's pregnant. She could be incomprehensible when it comes to illegal drugs as we also had to arrest her," he added.

South Africa peace conference postponed over Dalai Lama

JOHANNESBURG—ORGANIZERS SEEKING science conference meant to share best sports into being people and nations together because South Africa's government—fearing trouble with China—won't allow the Dalai Lama to attend.

South Africa's football officials and a grandson of Nelson Mandela, who were pushing Friday's conference together, announced on Tuesday it was postponed indefinitely because the Dalai Lama had been barred.

The conference had been in doubt since South African government said a day earlier the Dalai Lama was not welcome, prompting condemnations and a boycott by retired Cape Town archbishop Desmond Tutu and others.

Queen Rania of Jordan, the entire United Peace Committee, other luminaries and Hollywood actress Charlize Theron, a native of South Africa, had been among those who declined to attend.

Friday's conference was intended to highlight ways football can promote peace, and all Nobel peace laureates had been invited, along with world statesmen and celebrities. Irvin Khoza, who is chair of the South African committee organizing the 2010 World Cup, also heads the professional football league that was emerging and hosting the conference.

Organizers said they hoped to hold the event when the Dalai Lama could attend, and that they hoped that would be before the World Cup. South Africa's tournament will be the first in Africa.

Asked by reporters whether the Tibetan Nobel Peace laureate would be barred a visit before the sporting event, Thabo Mbeki, spokesperson for President Kgalema Motlanthe, said: "No, we won't."

He said he did not want a visit to be a distraction at a time when South Africa was hoping to showcase its transformation from pariah apartheid state to international, multiracial role model.

"You can't remove 'Hot Issue' the Dalai Lama, Mbeki said. "That becomes the issue and South Africa is no longer the issue."

Tibet's government-in-exile said South Africa was caving under pressure from China, but South Africa's government denied it. South Africa is China's largest African trading partner.

Mbeki had said a day earlier South Africa would not allow the Dalai Lama to visit for the peace conference, citing South Africa's ties to China and governing sheep-minister of South Africa. Fellow Nobel peace laureate Tutu as well as members of the Nobel Committee criticized the government's response.

Mbeki's Mandela, Nelson Mandela's grandson and a member of the conference organizing committee, told reporters on Tuesday he learned the Dalai Lama's fate when the conference is held. Barring a leader of the Dalai Lama's stature, the younger Mandela said, "is really usurping and saddening. Where are we headed in the future?"

"I don't think as a sovereign country we need to succumb to international pressures," he added, referring to criticism that South Africa acted to placate China.

Government spokesperson Mbeke has insisted, though, that South Africa did not act under pressure. Mbeke also has said the Dalai Lama has been welcome in the past and would be allowed back one day.

Thupten Jungdel, official spokesperson of the Tibetan government-in-exile in Dharamsala, India, said it was clear to him that "South Africa is acting under pressure" from China.

AP

New species found in Papua New Guinea

SYDNEY—A BRILLIANT green tree frog with huge black eyes, camouflaged spikes and a striped gecko are among more than 50 new species scientists have discovered in a remote, mountainous region of Papua New Guinea.

The discoveries were announced on Wednesday in Washington, D.C.-based Conservation International, which spent the past several months analyzing more than 600 animal species the group found during its expedition to the South Pacific island nation in July and August.

Of the animals discovered, 30 spider species, three frogs and a gecko appear to have never been described in scientific literature before, the conservation group said. The new frogs include a tiny brown animal with a sharp chin; a bug-eyed bright green tree frog and another frog with a loud chirping call. One of the jumping spiders is shiny and pale green, while another is furry and brown.

"If you're finding things that are that big and that spectacular but are new, that's really an indication that there's a lot out there that we don't know about," said expedition leader Steve Richards.

AP

British code crackers reminisce war exploits

BLETCHLEY PARK, ENGLAND—Inside World War II, the best brains in Britain cracked Germany's encrypted secrets but never broke their own code of silence.

Now a group-hunted and using walking sticks and at least one wheelchair, the legendary code breakers returned for a reunion on Tuesday at Bletchley Park, where they labored in the grim, blacked-out rooms and played a key role in defeating the Nazis.

The code breakers who overthrew Hitler's ambitions by giving Prime Minister Winston Churchill and his wartime Cabinet crucial advance knowledge of Germany's intentions, also demonstrated the power of intelligence.

Age has not dimmed the code breakers' fierce pride. They don't boast—the British don't do that—but they know they saved lives.

"Do you know what Churchill called us?" said Jean Valentine, 88, her blue eyes flashing. "He called us the geese that laid the golden eggs but never cackled."

Tuesday's event was to honor a rebuilt replica of the Turing Bombe, the machine invented by mathematician Alan Turing that was an essential forerunner of the modern computer. That invention deciphered the German military's encrypted messages that were encoded by the Nazis' typewriter-like Enigma machines.

"It was like getting a newspaper of German material every day," said Andrew Hodges, author of a biography about Turing. "The war would have been very different without it."

AP

MIKE Hillyard, one of the volunteers who rebuilt a replica of the Turing Bombe machine that helped crack the Nazi Enigma Code, stands by the machine at Bletchley Park in Milton Keynes, England, on Tuesday. —

THE FLYING DOCTOR IS IN
Mercedes-Benz Service Clinic: Free Car Service Check-Up

The "flying doctor" Andrew Ridsdale will be in Mercedes-Benz Greenhills from March 23 to 25 and in Mercedes-Benz Global City on March 26 and 27. Free car service check-up will continue until the 4th of April. Those who would schedule their check-up earlier can get a chance to have a 45-minute one-on-one car evaluation with the flying doctor himself. Ridsdale is a certified technical specialist from Daimler who began his involvement with Mercedes-Benz Passenger Cars in 1977.

A special car deserves special attention. A world-class car deserves a check-up with a world-class technical specialist. Call Mercedes-Benz Greenhills at 723-5808 locals 142, 143 or 120, or Mercedes-Benz in Global City at 815-7777 local 111, and schedule your free car service check-up and appointment with the flying doctor.

France to compensate nuclear test victims

PARIS—THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT offered for the first time on Tuesday to compensate victims of nuclear tests in Algeria and the South Pacific, bowing to decades of pressure by people sickened by radiation—and seeking to soothe France's conscience.

"It's time for our country to be at peace with itself, at peace thanks to a system of indemnification and reparations," French Defense Minister Hervé Morin said in presenting a draft law on the proposals.

Veterans, understandably welcomed the move, nearly 50 years after France conducted its first atomic tests. But they criticized it as too stingy, and it could likely stop toward healing wounds left by explosions that sent blinding white flashes over Polynesia and the Algerian Sahara.

The French government will set aside some euros 10 million ($13.1 million) for the compensation fund, Morin says. Worth comparison, but approved more than $1.38 billion in compensation in victims of nuclear tests since the second atomic of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act in 1990.

French Army veterans Pierre Leroy recalled being present when a nuclear explosion blasted through its concussive structure and sent a radioactive cloud over the bolters in 1962.

"We were 19, 20 years old. They told us, 'There are no risks, it's not dangerous,'" he said. "There were no precautions."

He described being worn down by years of subsequent government denials of negligence and refusals to compensate victims.

"We're not asking for the moon," Leroy said.

AP

INK FOR LESS LAUNCHES ' REFILL AND WIN A BRAND NEW CAR' PROMO

Get an ink refill and get the chance to win a brand new Toyota Vios!

Ink for Less, the country's largest ink refilling station, proudly announces its latest promo which also gives its lucky customers a chance to win digital cameras, Pantheons, cell phones, computer packages, printers, scanners and other exciting printer ink refill packages.

The promo will run from February 23 to August 31, 2009, with three draws scheduled for April 15, June 11 and August 10. The Grand Draw will be on September 11, 2009, 3:00 P.M. at the Ink for Less Corporate Office.

In line with this promo, Ink for Less continues to offer its home refilling and Continuous Ink Supply System (CISS) services. By simply dialing their dedicated service hotline, customers can get to experience the convenience of having their printer cartridges refilled either at home or at work.

Aside from their prompt and reliable service, Ink for Less' technical specialists also offer printer checks and cleaning for free. They also educate consumers on proper printer care and handling. With today's impending economic slowdown, Ink for Less' services provide more definite and viable cost-cutting solutions for local companies.

"Preventive maintenance has proven effective in reducing costs and maximizing savings.

For even longer-term savings, Ink for Less encourages its customers to upgrade their systems with the CISS, which is a cost-effective alternative for ink-jet printer cartridges. The conversion can be done instantly and does not cost much. Printer owners need not worry, the conversion does not affect the configuration and systems compatibility and make it even more compatible with other ink types.

As part of their environmental campaign, IFL technicians also talked to educate their clients about the various options they can take to upgrade their printer set-ups for optimum cost-effectiveness. With their newly-gained knowledge about CISS systems, most customers are better equipped to make more informed choices that lead to better savings in the long run.

Ink for Less' Home Refilling Service and CISS services are available at very affordable rates. Customers may also purchase other printer-related equipment and supplies at competitive prices.

Maximize your printer's full potential now, at the same time, get the chance to win a brand new Toyota Vios and tons of exciting prizes! Call 856-5555 for more details.

Philippine International Trading Corporation
PITC
INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

ITB-BID FOR THE SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF BRAND NEW CAL 5.56 X 45MM RIFLE/M4/A1 (.223) FOR THE BUREAU OF JAIL MANAGEMENT AND PENOLOGY (BJMP)
Bid Ref No. 2009 – 017
Approved Budget for the Contract: P 23,797,994.00

The PHILIPPINE INTERNATIONAL TRADING CORPORATION (PITC) invites authorized Local and Foreign Supplier of Distributors/Importers/Traders of Brand New Cal. 5.56 x 45mm rifle/M4/A1 (.223) for the BJMP to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply and delivery of the items as enumerated as shown below:

Quantity	Unit	Description	Approved Budget		Cost/Price of Bid Documents	Bid Amount Expressed in Foreign Currency (if FCB)	Bid Amount Expressed in Peso Equivalent (if FCB)	Foreign Exchange Rate (if FCB)
			Unit Price	Total				
100	units	CAL 5.56 x 45mm Rifle / M4/A1 (.223)	P 23,800.00 /GUN	P 23,797,994.00	P 10,000.00	P 357,979.44	P 350,000.00	P 52,797,994.00
TOTAL				P 23,797,994.00	P 10,000.00	P 357,979.44	P 350,000.00	P 52,797,994.00

*Bids must be supplied and fresh manufactured and quoted based on CIF prices in Philippine Pesos only.
** Only those issued by Local Commercial Banks are accepted.

The approved budget for the contract is P 23,797,994.00 with funding source from the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology per SARO No. 2009-03-00-0170.

The applicant must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. Must be in existence for at least three (3) consecutive years prior to pending / advertisement of the project.
2. Must have satisfactorily completed within the last three (3) years at least one (1) single contract or non-exhibited purchase orders of similar nature with value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the approved budget of contract for the project.
3. Foreign Suppliers must have a reputable Philippine Based Representative Office or company.
4. Licenses for bidders:
   4.1. For local manufacturers, must have valid licenses to Manufacture issued by the Philippine National Police (PNP);
   4.2. For Local importers / importers must have valid PNP Importer's License.
   4.3. For Foreign Suppliers, must have valid License to manufacture and export authenticated by the nearest Philippine Consulate where the supplier is based.
5. Must be Philippine registered (DTI or SEC) in the business line of;
6. With no previous deficiencies in the Philippines for the same items being bid.
7. Not currently under suspension or blacklisted by any government agency or office.

All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in Cash, Cashier's Check, Manager's Check or Standby Letter of Credit (SLC) in a bank acceptable to the Philippine government equivalent to two percent (2%) of the ABC.

Bid documents will be available for issuance starting 27 March 2009, weekdays only, from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, from the BAC Secretariat on 6th floor PITC Building at the 6th Floor of the NIA Building, 116 Timog Ave., Brgy. Sacred Heart, Quezon City and upon payment of non-refundable fee in cash amount of one (one) thousand pesos.

Three (3) duly authorized representatives of the prospective bidder shall be allowed to purchase bid documents.

Pre-bid Conference is scheduled on 01 April 2009, 10:00 AM at the Ground Floor AVR, Bureau of Export Trade Promotion, DTI-International Center (IC Building), DTI Ave. cor. Industry Eagle Rd., Makati City. Bidders may submit their queries, if any, in writing to the BAC Secretariat through Fax No. 818-6881 loc 480 on date thereof. PITC then prepares the submission and opening of bid documents.

The Submission of Bids and Representative Bidding(s) is set on before 10:00 AM (Secretariat closing) on the April 2009 at the designated bid box located at on the Ground Floor AVR, Bureau of Export Trade Promotion, DTI International Center-LC Building, DTI Ave. cor. Industry Eagle Rd., Makati City. Late bids will not be accepted.

The Bid Opening is on 10 April 2009, 10:00 AM which will be on the Ground Floor AVR, Bureau of Export Trade Promotion, DTI-International Center-LC Building, DTI Ave. cor. Industry Eagle Rd., Makati City.

The applicant bidder(s) shall be required to submit Performance Bond, Bid Conference, bid Evaluation and award of contract shall be governed by the provisions of R.A. 9184 and its implementing rules and regulations.

PITC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, declare a failure of bidding, waive any defects or informalities therein and/or accept the offers most advantageous and beneficial to the government. Further, the PITC assumes no responsibility whatsoever to corporations or individuals the prospective bidders for any inconvenience or for any delay of their eligibility or declaration or the preparation of bid bid. Prior to submission for opening of bids, bidders may withdraw or substitute through an hour of its own (1) hour prior to the opening of bids.

(SGD.) CARMELITA BRIGIDO SUNGCANGCO
Chair, Bids & Awards Committee II

Postdate on 26 March – 1 April 2009
CAPTION: PITC Philippine International Trading Corporation
Source: Philippine Daily Inquirer on 26 March 2009

The WORLD

Lito Lorente B. Gonce

Stop losing your hair. Regain your confidence!

For most women losing hair is like losing vibrancy, self-confidence and self-esteem. And this could lead to depression, anxiety and feelings of inferiority. Stop losing your hair. If there are women like Interior Designer Tessa Prieto-Valdes and Designer Eva Abesamis who fought and triumphed against hairloss — you can, too. Discover their secret.

Excessive stress, genes or too much extreme styling methods could cause women's hairloss. To stop falling and thinning, one needs the right treatments. In the Philippines, there's only one hairloss center where advanced treatments and highly trained technologists are found: **Svenson.**

Tessa Prieto-Valdes thinning hair as seen as she experienced its early signs. "Thinning hair makes a woman look older. I didn't want that to happen to me. When I noticed lots of hair on my pillow and my hair started to thin out, I immediately bought 'thickening' shampoos. But I was disappointed. They didn't stop my problem. Good thing I discovered Svenson. After a course of treatments, my hair regained its original volume. It's even softer, more lustrous. I could style it any way I want it!"

Tessa Prieto-Valdes

Eva Abesamis

Eva, on the other hand, wanted best results for her hair. "I didn't want to use other products. I just wanted the best. When a friend recommended Svenson, I decided to give it a try. I had no more falling hair. It's back to its lush, shiny, stunning look. I know I made the right decision. Thanks to Svenson!"

Stop falling and thinning hair
Call Svenson at **892-BLAIR (4247)**
234-0881or **cl0ud** today for a FREE consultation.
You can be assured that all
consultations are carried out in private.

Obama touts progress in fight vs recession

Obama

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT Barack Obama is claiming early progress in his aggressive campaign to lead the United States out of economic chaos and declared that despite obstacles ahead, the US is "moving in the right direction."

In a Tuesday evening news conference, Obama also defended the US dollar in the wake of China's suggestion for a renewed currency unit, saying "The dollar is extraordinarily strong right now," and "I don't believe that there is a need for a global currency."

The nationally broadcast evening news conference came at a pivotal moment in Obama's young presidency. On Monday, his administration presented its plan to revive the US financial system. Last month, Obama signed into law an $787-billion economic stimulus plan, and Democrats in Congress are preparing budget proposals that will largely determine how much of his agenda will be passed.

Meanwhile, Obama is preparing for a five-nation trip next week that includes a London summit on the global economic crisis, while, away from the economy, an announcement is expected by Friday on a revamped US strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Obama, just 64 days in office, signed partnership with his presidency not only in trying to lift the United States out of the recession, but also by seeking peace between Israel and Palestinians and in preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

"This is a big sweat-lines. It's not a speed-boat. It doesn't turn around immediately," he said.

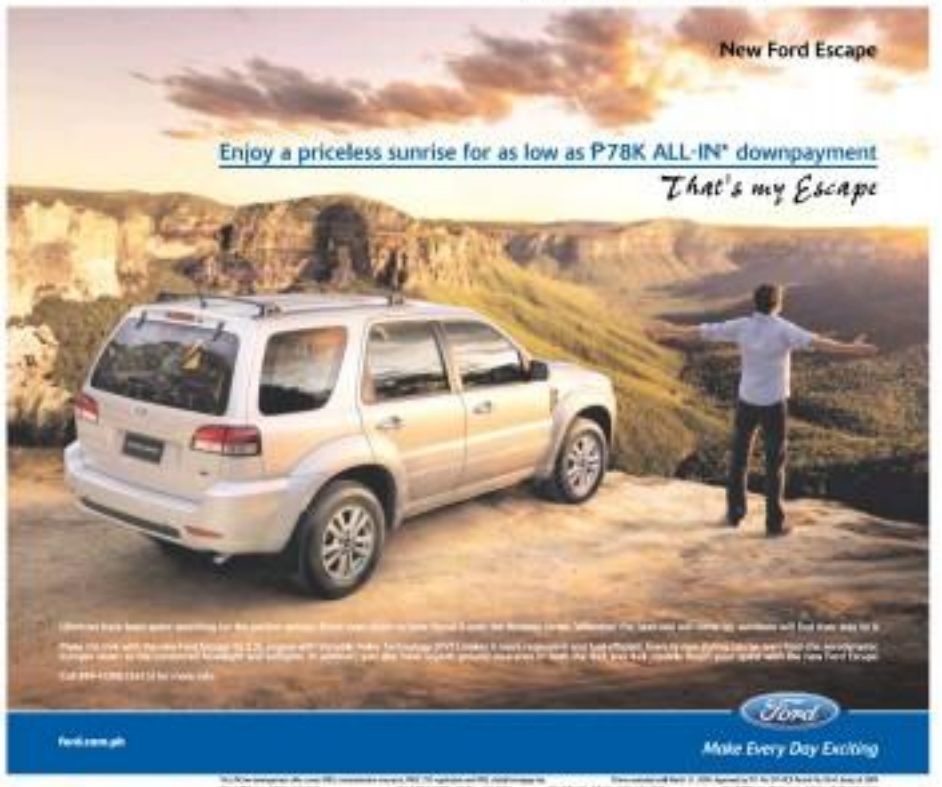
Obama remains widely popular, but his pastel through some roughhouse weeks. The news has been dominated by outrage over bonuses to executives at bailed-out insurance giant AIG. Republicans have assailed Obama's spending plans as unneeded and too costly. And some key congressional Democrats have resisted Obama's calls for middle-class tax cuts and a "cap-and-trade" program to fight global warming.

Obama defended cap-and-trade as the best way to move toward cleaner energy, but noted "there are a lot of technical issues that are going to have to be worked through."

On the economy, Obama defended the steps his administration has taken to counter the recession and an unprecedented credit crisis. He said markets and others have jobs today because of the economic stimulus measure, and the United States is "beginning to see signs of recession's sides and additional housing prices for the first time in a long time."

But he said full-fledged recovery is months away and he added, "It will take patience."

At the same time, he said, "we're in a better place because of the decisions that we made." AP



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Editor Raul O. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Edna Garcia S. Pacheco

BUSINESS

January imports down 34.5% to $3.27B

Fuel, electronic components lead decline

By Reuirel W. Dunlogan

MERCHANDISE IMPORTS IN JANUARY FELL 34.5 PERCENT TO $3.27 billion from $4.99 billion a year ago as the global economic slump worsened, the National Statistics Office reported yesterday.

It said the import bill also contracted 8.9 percent compared to the previous month's $3.13 billion.

The NSO said exports in January also plunged 48.6 percent to $2.49 billion, worsening from a contraction of 40.3 percent in December.

Both exports and imports have been declining since October last year.

Electronic components, which account for two-fifths of imports, fell 43.3 percent to $1.31 billion year-on-year from $2.31 billion.

However, electronic imports were up 15.1 percent month-on-month from $1.14 billion in December 2008.

January imports of mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials—which represented the second biggest in terms of value—were down 58 percent to $421.91 million from $1.03 billion last year due mainly to the sharp decline in the cost of crude oil.

However, the country's third-biggest import for the month—transport equipment—jumped 49.7 percent to $198.54 million from $132 million.

Industrial machinery and equipment imports barely increased to $363.38 million from $361.37 million a year ago. Iron and steel imports were down 50.8 percent to $84.31 million from $106.41 million.

Other major imports in January were organic and inorganic chemicals, down 24.2 percent to $302.82 million; cereals and cereals preparations, up 40.1 percent to $80.72 million; plastics in primary and nonprimary form, down 33.1 percent to $65.34 million; medicinal and pharmaceutical products, up 32.2 percent to $63.63 million; and textile

JOHNLIFE 1B

PBCom owners start divestment plan

By Dan I. C. Dumlao

SHAREHOLDERS OF PHILIPPINE BANK OF COMMUNICATIONS (PBCom) have committed to divest a controlling stake in the bank by June 25, this year before the state-owned Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. conducts the bidding itself.

There is no deal yet on the sale of a 67-percent stake as a five-year "holding period" expired yesterday, but the divestment process has started, banking sources said. The March 25 deadline was for shareholders to begin the process of divestment and not the deadline to complete the sale, a PBCom source said yesterday.

The was confirmed by PDIC president Jose Magsaysay, who said that the divestment process had indeed begun. "The new investors (a group led by the Financial Investors and auditor submit their valuation reports," he said.

The Macquarie group and auditing firm Punongbayan & Araullo were mandated as financial adviser and auditor of the process, respectively.

After the valuation report is completed, Magsaysay said the shareholders would have 60 days—or up to June 25—to sell, or the PDIC itself would conduct a bidding.

Five years ago when PDIC extended a P7.6-billion financial package to the bank, the shareholders were required to sell at least 67 percent of the bank to a new investor by March 2009. Under the agreement, PDIC obtained a special power of attorney (SPA) for it to enhance the sale of shares if the bank's shareholders would not be able to do so within the prescribed period.

The shares to be sold represent a big chunk of the 93 percent combined interests of the Lao (37 percent), Nubla (28 percent) and Chong (26 percent) families that join[ed] since PBCom.

PBCom, which ranks 14th in total assets, has a market capitalization of P4.3 billion from its outstanding common and preferred shares.

In late 2008, Chinese-Filipino businessman Hanbo Ang's Philwest Bank signed a P5-billion deal to acquire 50.28 percent of

PBCOM 1B

Foreign debt-to-GDP ratio lowest in 10 years

Tan trumps SMC anew in Ginebra brand bid

By Doris C. Dumlao

DUBAI LUCKY DAYS: DUBAI LAT Distillers Inc. scored another victory to in an intellectual property dispute with Gilmore Inn Miguel Inc.

The row stemmed from Tanduay's use of the word "Ginebra" on its Dubai Lucky Days brand, which was contested by GSMI.

In a resolution dated March 4, 2009, Intellectual Property Office legal affairs director Estrellita Beltran-Abelardo ordered a motion for reconsideration filed by GSM on an earlier ruling on a P100-million intellectual property case against Tanduay filed by GSMI against Tanduay for the use of the word Ginebra in its gin brand, "Ginebra Kapitan."

GSM's petition for Tanduay's trademark application was rejected by the IPO in May last year but GSM, a unit of San Miguel Corp., filed a motion for reconsideration.

In its resolution, the IPO said there was no denying that GSM had been using the word Ginebra as part of its mark since 1834 has the word remained generic and, as such, could not be considered to have acquired a secondary meaning.

"The length of use and vast amount of advertising will enable it distinctive," the IPO said.

Beltran-Abelardo said "Ginebra" was a Spanish term for gin, which came from from the French word "genever" meaning "juniper," a berry that gives gin its flavor, knew Bravo.

She also cited American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language which defines the term "Ginebra" as "a strong alcoholic beverage made by distilling or redistilling rye ..."

"The opponent of the opposer did even attempting that the word 'Ginebra' is generic, 'Ginebra' is also a mark that determines the kinds of goods on which it is applied and thus capable of acquiring secondary meaning, is not tenable," the resolution said.

Beltran-Abelardo said it was explained in the decision that: "Generic terms are those that constitute the common descriptive name of an article or substance ... or are commonly used as the name or description of a kind of goods ... and are excluded."

By Michelle F. Barro

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas has credited the liability management strategies of both the government and the private sector for the noticeable drop in the country's external debt-to-GDP (gross domestic product) ratio as of November to its lowest level since the Asian crisis.

Data from the BSP showed the external debt ratio dropping to 31.77 percent in January to November last year from 40.22 percent in the same period a year ago. This, the data showed, was the lowest since the ratio hit 70.80 percent in 1998.

The BSP said the decline was a welcome development in the face of economic turmoil. This, it said, somehow gives a boost to the country's credit standing which, in turn, could help private-sector parties and the government find relatively cheaper financing from the international capital market than if the ratio were higher.

A favorable borrowing cost should help encourage investment initiatives that are indispensable at this time when the economy needs it the most, it said.

In 2007, the full-year average external debt ratio reached 38.13 percent.

The decline in the external debt ratio was a result of the growing economy and deliberate efforts of the government to manage foreign obligations.

"Lower debt ratios reflect good sovereign performance, making the country less vulnerable to external investor volatility," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said.

He said the prepayment of foreign debts helped ease the external debt ratio. The BSP earlier said $3.02 billion in external debts were prepaid last year.

Japanese-owned firm, SURE form joint venture

By Abigail L. Ho

MG LEASING CORP. A LUXEMBG company owned by Hyderone Mitsui & Pioneer and Marubeni Corp., and Marubeni Corp., has formed a joint venture with local firm Solaseur Using Renewable Energy Inc. (SURE) to handle renewable energy projects in the country.

The joint venture, Asia Eco Energy Philippines Inc., is 60-percent owned by the Japanese group and 40 percent by SURE.

In a statement, SURE corporate secretary Clarence de Guia said the joint venture would activate several waste-to-energy projects currently under the SURE portfolio.

These included the waste-to-power facility of San Miguel Corp.'s Monterey hog farm in Sariaya, Batangas, as well as biomass-fired power plants of Silangan Bioma in Lipa City, Batangas; Holiday Hills Stock and Breeding Farm Corp. in San Pedro, Laguna, and Sierra Farms in Gen. Natividad, Nueva Ecija.

In exchange, he said MG would take the additional funding needed to put up and run these projects. The Japanese firm's investment infusion amounted to more than $1 million.

According to MG official Daisuke Kihara, the establishment of the joint venture could provide opportunities for Japanese firms to participate in the Philippine effort.

SURE holds a wide range of renewable energy projects, for companies that handle huge amounts of biomass waste, such as those in the poultry and hog businesses.

Using technologies developed in-house, SURE provides services to its clients on a build-operate-transfer scheme.

De Guia said SURE spares clients from putting up capital to construct a facility is despite of or treat their waste materials.

SURE also seeks to elevate the electricity it produces.

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January ...

From page B1

ware, fabrics, made-up articles and related products, down 27.2 percent to $54.96 million.

With the decline of imports and exports in January, the country's total trade of goods also fell 37.3 percent to $5.78 billion from $9.22 billion.

This put the balance of trade at a deficit of $739 million compared with the $762-million deficit in the same period last year.

Meanwhile, the value of production of the manufacturing sector slumped 16.6 percent year on year in January due to declining production observed in 18 of 20 major industries, according to preliminary results of the NSO's Monthly Integrated Survey of Selected Industries.

The NSO said positive year-on-year growth was observed in only two industries—the nonmetallic industry and beverage industry, at 7.1 percent and 10 percent, respectively.

Two-digit declines were seen in petroleum products, leather products, basic metals, tobacco products, miscellaneous manufactures, furniture and fixtures, paper and paper products, textiles, electrical machinery, publishing and printing, transport equipment, footwear and wearing apparel, and machinery except electrical.

The four biggest losers were petroleum products at 76.4 percent; leather products, 58 percent; basic metals, 20.3 percent; and tobacco, 20.2 percent.

PBCom ...

From page B1

PBCom, held by the Ychiu and Chang families. But the agreement left out the Lee family, which holds the single biggest voting block at 27 percent.

Under the agreement with PERC, however, a minimum of 67 percent block must be held.

Ychiu from Philtread, tobacco magnate Lucio Tan, who controls Philippine National Bank, is also reportedly interested in PBCom.

AyalaLand

NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the annual meeting of stockholders of AYALA LAND, INC. will be held at the Grand Ballroom, InterContinental Manila, Ayala Center, Makati City, on Wednesday, April 1, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. with the following

AGENDA

1. Proof of Notice and Determination of Quorum
2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings
3. Annual Report
4. Ratification of All Acts and Resolutions of the Board of Directors and of the Executive Committee Adopted in the Ordinary Course of Business During the Preceding Year.
5. Election of Directors (including the Independent Directors)
6. Election of Auditors and Fixing of their Remuneration
7. Consideration of Such Other Business as May Properly Come Before the Meeting
8. Adjournment

Only stockholders of record at the close of business on February 23, 2009 are entitled to notice of, and to vote at, this meeting.

Makati City, February 9, 2009

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Corporate Secretary

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BUSINESS

Bright prospects may buoy investment activities in RP

Tropic violation

BREAKTIME

Conrado M. Banal III

"CLEARLY, THE NPO-DATIONAL Pricing Office] no longer has exclusive jurisdiction over the pricing service requirements of the government once standard and accountable forms."

These were the exact words of Manuel Gaite, deputy executive secretary for legal affairs, who issued the opinion on NPO's primacy of subcontract pricing jobs of other government offices.

Gaite was responding to the Department of Finance's query on the NPO practice.

It seems that NPO or ill "surrenders" private printing companies to get the contracts from those other government agencies, which, of course, brings up the contract price. The NPO officially gets 10 percent of the amount of the contract. Certain NPO officials also get ... well, a certain percentage.

That "considerations" varies from time to time, according to our sources.

Anyway, Gaite noted that new technology made the printing business highly competitive. Thus, the government stands to benefit from the best services in the market at the best price.

That's why, according to Gaite, the Lobi at the Palace issued an executive order, removing the "exclusive jurisdiction" of the NPO over pricing requirements of the government.

That is Executive Order No. 378, which the NPO, in effect, opposes in he violating.

* * *

THE NATIONAL Irrigation Administration, or NIA, recently conducted a public bidding for a P1.4-billion purchase of heavy equipment to rehabilitate its water systems all over this tropical country. You know, places that really need a lot of water?

Of course, the losing bidder in the project would have to make sense in media for supposed violations of bidding procedures.

That is none other than a company called Maniera, which claims to be the country's exclusive distributor of the Japan-made "Komatsu" brand of heavy equipment.

The main point of the Maniera media offensive was it should have gotten the contract because it would have submitted the lowest price.

That was, shall we say, only Maniera's claim.

For the fact remains that anybody would even know the price offered by Maniera, for the simple reason that the NIA bidding committee did not open Maniera's bid envelop.

The bidding committee, of course, must review the qualifications of the bidders.

And it found that Maniera failed to submit all the required documents, including—would you believe—a valid business permit and SEC registration.

If you were really serious in getting a billion-peso contract, you should at least have all your papers in order, right?

* * *

WHO WAS behind that grenade explosion at a Hyundai dealership in the East in Taguig City?

Hard is that the attack is the handiwork of certain groups that want to tarnish the image of the area as a business district.

"Any terrorist act, whether done by real terrorists or by someone who wants to project fear, is bad for us," said Alberto Lim of the Makati Business Club.

But why would anybody want to destroy the image of Taguig?

That incident serves as a black eye to city officials. You know something like, officials could not keep normal-the-clock security for all business establishments in the area and prevent supposed terrorists from detonating grenades. Or something like it.

In the process, some other group—not the incumbent Taguig officials—would look handsome before the public.

Understandably, Taguig is fast becoming a business district. My info is that the location in the West even not really considered that Hyundai explosion was, well, "normal" terrorism.

They suspect somebody from the military is behind the plot. For one, the target was an empty office. Also, the explosive was an antipersonnel grenade, which only the military has.

Of course, it may be a part of a media blitz for top officials of this new administration after some to try their luck in the mid-elections, simply because they have been appointed and reappointed many times but have never been confirmed.

Immediately many desperately want to become the next mayor of Taguig.

Country continues to enjoy investor confidence—BSP

By Michelle V. Rosca

PHOLOSOPHY NEGATIVE REAL INTEREST RATE may have dampened the country's investment climate, but the country's prospects continue to be bright—a fact not lost on foreign investors, according to a central bank official.

"Real interest rate has been negative for quite some time already, but this is not much of a problem when investor confidence is good," BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said.

The Philippines is still growing, while advanced countries have already fallen into recession, and this development will serve to outmaneuver efforts to promote the country as an investment site, he said.

Real interest rate in the country has stayed negative since last year because of high inflation and low Treasury bill rates. Negative real interest rate, which happens when inflation rate is higher than T-bill rates, is a turn-off to investors because yields from investments are simply eaten up by rising consumer prices.

During times of negative real interest rates, there is no incentive to invest in securities. Investors tend to spend, rather than invest.

Inflation averaged at 9.3 percent last year, while the benchmark 91-day T-bill rate had stayed below 5 percent.

Monetary officials, however, expect inflation to ease this year to a range of between 2.5 and 3.5 percent.

Guinigundo said the fact that the country grew 4.6 percent last year, while the United States and Europe fell into recession, should make investors rethink their investment orientation.

Investors normally believe that advanced economies like the United States are preferable investment sites. But he said that the economic turmoil offshore would encourage investors toward the Philippines.

The BSP said the Philippines was able to avoid the full impact of the crisis partly because of prudent regulation of the financial sector.

While banks and nonbank financial institutions in advanced economies were allowed to invest in risky complicated investment instruments, financial institutions in the Philippines were monitored closely as far as their investment activities were concerned.

Banks and other financial institutions in the country were not allowed to take on risks without adequate cover, the BSP said.

For this year, the Philippine economy is estimated by the government to grow between 3.7 and 4.4 percent. This is slower than last year's 4.6 percent. But analysts said such growth, if realized, would be respectable given forecasts that advanced economies would plunge deeper into recession this year.

The United States and European economies are likely to contract by 3 to 3.5 percent this year, according to latest projections by the International Monetary Fund.

Their contractions are seen as dragging down the global economy, which the IMF expects to contract by 0.5 to 1 percent this year.

Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan

LIFESTYLE Food

Fried 'tilapia' as crispy as 'chicharon'—with sauces

KRISPY KREME NOW HAS A WHOLE line of chocolate doughnuts, a set of 12 varieties called Chocolate Fanatical.

Chocolate-Glazed and Chocolate-Glazed Undated #Bad are delicious.

I spoke to KK's Rizi Fuentebella whose livelihood is chocolate the famous Rizal's Restaurant.

I asked him why he expected KK among other brands, and for his pointers for success.

"For the doughnut category, there's nothing like Krispy Kreme. KK is an exciting brand," he said.

In 2006, "there were a lot of Filipinos franchise-carrying homes from the US. Even then, there was high brand recognition for KK."

To those who wish to own franchises, Fuentebella has a piece of advice: A brand that's successful abroad may not necessarily succeed here. Do your homework and understand the market you are in.

"One must take deliberate and concrete precisely what the market expects of the brand.

"Franchising is not for everyone and requires dedication to ensure success. One may have an advantage by starting off with brand recognition, but without passion and integrity for the business, one wont endure."

If KK isn't a sweet taste of success, I don't know what is. When its first branch opened at Rockwell's High Street, there was a line of around 800 to 1,000 people dying to have a bite of Krispy Kreme.

Food tasking

Our very own UP Philippine culinary team will go to Hong Kong in May to defend their title as the UP International Culinary Classic Gourmet Team Challenge champs.

Glee-worthy at on March 29, 7 p.m. at Gerald's Restaurant for the first of three team practice sessions. All tastings are open to the public.

Seats are limited to 60 so reservations are required. Call 810-6575/810-2763.

Fried 'tilapia'

I tasted fried tilapia in a restaurant, that was so crispy it was almost like chicharon. How is it done and can you give convenient recipes for fish for the Lenten season? More power.

Malcolm

PMRA-CO

KK'S CHOCOLATE-GLAZED Doughnuts

Reggie Aquino

KITCHEN RESCUE

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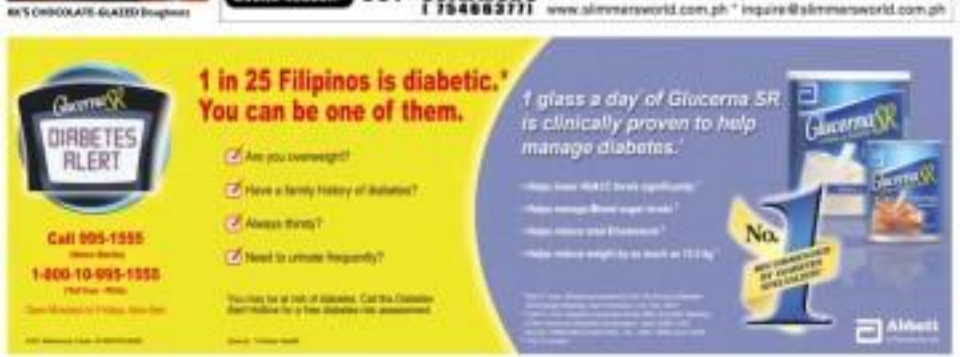

Four top chefs, four unique takes on the Bacalhau

Margarita Fores, Colin Mackay, Jessie Sincioco and Vicky Pacheco apply their culinary savvy to the star dish of Macanese cuisine

By Vicgie Boga-Reyes

BACALHAU (BACALHAO IN SPANISH) IS A dried-salted codfish that can be prepared and cooked in many ways. It is a staple dish in Macau, a former colony of Portugal.

A group of leading Filipino chefs toured Macau five months ago to learn Macanese cooking. They eventually created a Macanese bacalhau dish (or recipe, to be more exact).

These chefs included Margarita Fores of Pepato and Cibo; Colin Mackay of Sale, Sale Bistro and People's Palace; Jessie Sincioco of Le Soufflé Boulevard; and Vicky Pacheco of Chateau 1771, Sentro and Portiko. They were invited by the Macau Government Tourism Office (MGTO).

Here are recipes from the four chefs, each of whom whips up his or her own version of bacalhau. Interestingly, it's their first time to offer this salted fish to their menus, which will serve them through until Easter Sunday.

MARGARITA Fores (right) and her bacalhau croquettes

"In part as recognition point on their serving dishes, they garnish them with something flavorful like olives. That's what makes Macanese cuisine unique. They have an African chicken that uses as much paprika with turmeric, and is served with hard-boiled egg, red bell peppers and olives. It's actually a very exaggerated combination of flavors," explains Fores.

The food trip also made Fores more familiar with the ingredients.

"I was happy to discover how delicious their olive oil is, because I've been exposed only to Italian and Spanish olive oils. It was really a nice way to discover that there's so much of this European influence in a very Asian location. We were sort of given an increative venture into their cuisine. We went to their beeswax hotel and restaurant which has layered Macanese cuisine from an international serving, and I must confess again."

Croquette de Bacalhau is Fores' own version of serving Macanese food without veering away too much from the real thing. For the breading, she uses oriental breadcrumbs rather than the traditional Japanese. She mixes bacalhau with onions and mixes them with tomatoes. The one that adds body is the béchamel, which comes with a garlic sauce mix, simmered with piquillo oil and pureed parsley with a bit of tarragon to neutralize the flavor of the seafood.

Croquetta de Bacalhau

Ingredients:
1.65 g Baked bacalhau (salt-cod)
4 c fresh milk (for soaking)
2 tbsp olive oil
30 g chopped garlic
30 g chopped onions
6 tbsp flour
4 c fresh milk
30 g butter
50 g parsley sauce
Salt and pepper to taste
For breading:
4 pcs eggs
½ Japanese bread crumbs and ½ local bread crumbs

Soak bacalhau in fresh milk. Set aside. Meanwhile, sauté garlic and onions in olive oil. Then add flaked bacalhau. Set aside. Drain fresh milk then add butter, flour. Mix all ingredients. Season with cooked salt and pepper. Boil and let cool. Refrigerate. Form into desired shape.

For breading, beat eggs, roll in bread crumbs then egg, roll in bread crumbs again. Makes 50 pieces.

Creamy Scrambled Eggs with Salt and Cod and Crisp Potatoes

Bala Bistro, G/F, Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center, Makati

COLIN Mackay

Colin Mackay likes to cook things that he likes to eat from other places. If he has some memorable scrambled eggs he loves it, he tries it in his kitchen and subsequently it is for his customers. Much like the Creamy Scrambled Eggs with Salt Cod and Crisp Potatoes which he first enjoyed in a Portuguese restaurant.

"It's so amazing," Mackay says. "The ingredients are very simple. If you look at it, you'd think it has so many things in it, but it doesn't."

The dish consists of olive oil, potatoes, onions, bacalhau and eggs. "Though it tastes like it's got lots of buttery ingredients, Mackay insists it's just the flavors that come together. The taste of salt cod is already quite rich.

"But for me, Macanese cuisine is essentially a fusion cuisine with all the different cultures coming together to use little space," he adds.

He admits it's pretty hard to work with bacalhau because it's time-consuming.

"You must store it every time because some places are more salty than the others. The salt cod we've used to the past has been very dehydrated, so you must soak it for two or three days and change the water three or four times to remove the excessive saltiness. But the salt cod we use now is very light. We soak it only for 20 minutes to water and poach for five minutes, and it still comes out very flavorful.

Creamy Scrambled Eggs with Salt and Cod and Crisp Potatoes

Ingredients:
150 g prepared salt cod
2 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley
150 g potatoes, peeled and cut into matchsticks
3 large red onions, sliced
6 organic eggs
3 tbsp pouring cream
3 tsp lemon
Salt and pepper
Olive oil
Peanut or olive oil for frying potatoes

To prepare the cod, soak it in cold water for at least 24 hours, changing the water twice. Cook the cod by slowly simmering it in milk for five minutes until tender. Remove, cool and strain skin and bones. Flake.

Deep-fry the matchstick potatoes in oil until golden. Drain and lightly season with salt.

In wok, slowly cook the onions and bay with four tablespoons olive oil. Cook until soft and sweet. Add the cod and half of the potatoes and season together.

Stir the eggs and cream with ½ tsp of sea salt and ½ tsp of ground white pepper. Add this to the warm potatoes and onions and scramble slowly until soft and creamy. Fold in the remaining potatoes and chopped parsley and serve with freshly toasted sour dough bread.

Serves five people.

Pastéis de Bacalhau

Le Soufflé Boulevard, G/L, Annonciata Square, Annonciata St. cor. Boulevard Circuit, Makati

JESSIE Sincioco

Jessie Sincioco's take on salt-cod codfish comes in the form of Pastéis de Bacalhau or salt cod cakes. She first tried it in Estoril in Macau, where she and her companions ended up ordering seemingly everything.

"I told myself, hahabitin ko ang buong ito," she says and so she did—as quantities of small cod-shaped cakes served with nice greens and a cream-based dip.

Sincioco says it's never difficult to work with bacalhau. It's just a matter of removing the saltiness. She washes it like so the times, soaks it in water overnight then boils it in milk.

"That's why my guests find my bacalhau dish soft and delicious," she says.

About Macanese cuisine, "it's also like the food we eat at home. We have a lot of similar dishes. Minchi is only stir-fried ground meat served with fried potatoes and egg, much like our arroz-a-la-cubana."

Initially, she had apprehensions about introducing Macanese dishes to Le Soufflé. "Luckily, I found a way to present them in this setting. Since I started serving them here, people have been coming back for more. Some people are even saying we've been able to do it better than what they had tasted in Macau."

Pastéis de Bacalhau

(Salt-cod cakes)

Ingredients:
250 g (1.8 cups) cooked bacalhau
2 tbsp potatoes
1 small onion, very finely chopped
2 eggs
2 tbsp finely-chopped parsley
Olive oil for deep-frying

Wash the bacalhau under running water, then soak for 24 hours, regularly changing the water. Set aside. Pour boiling milk over it, and leave it for a further two hours. This helps to tenderize the fish before removing the skin and bones. Flake or break the flesh into small pieces.

Boil potatoes in the skins in plenty of water until well-cooked. Drain, remove skins and mash potatoes until very smooth.

Combine bacalhau, potatoes, onion, eggs and parsley, seasoning the mixture by hand until it is soft and smooth. Chill for 20 minutes.

Form the mixture into quenelles between two spoons and deep-fry in olive oil on high heat. Serve hot or cold with a dip.

Makes 12 pieces.

FOUR

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Four top chefs, four unique takes on the Bacalhau

From page C2

Bacalhau Com Natas

Chateaux 1771, G/F Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center, Makati; Bistro 1771, Arevalo, Iloilo; Bistro Global City, Taguig

Nicky-Anne Pacheco's Bacalhau Com Natas is a gratin-like dish with bacalhau, Yukon potatoes, milk and cream. It's not an encounter on the cardiovascular gratin; Pacheco makes use of evaporated milk and a heavy cream to make a positive blend. The evaporated milk also provides a béchamel base.

Pacheco finds Mexican cuisine simple and robust, very typical home-style cooking, though with strong and intense flavors derived from shrimp paste, turmeric and canola.

"I'm using three ingredients and cooking techniques, but I still have to go for tasting. Pinoy," she says. Her own version of Mexican grilled chicken uses pimiento, turmeric, olive oil and pepper instead of the usual paprika sauce.

Pacheco has found numerous of the Red Market, where the fish could be bought fresh, still jumping.

"I love the place. One floor is devoted to veggies and dried goods including beans, almonds, dried duck legs and chorizos. The seafood is all fresh; I don't even know their names."

Bacalhau Com Natas

(Baked Salted Cod in Cream)

Ingredients

1 tbsp softened butter

250 g bacalhau, soaked in some overnight, changed four times

1 ½ c fresh milk

5 tbsp canola oil

250 g potatoes, peeled and diced (about ½ inch-thick slices)

1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

½ c white onion, sliced thinly

2 tbsp flour

White ground pepper to taste

½ c whipping cream

½ c breadcrumbs, white but dry

¼ c grated Romano/Red cheese

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a 10x6x2 inch baking dish with butter. Set aside.

Condition the bacalhau and milk in a sauce pot and bring to a simmer. Cook the bacalhau until tender. Drain and save the milk. When the bacalhau is cool enough to handle, flake it into big pieces.

In a pan, heat the canola oil and shallow-fry the potatoes until half-cooked, batch by batch. Drain and set aside. In the same pan, add olive oil and sauté the onions. Cook until the onions are transparent but not brown.

Add the flaked bacalhau and mix. Add the flour and mix. Strain the reserved milk into the pan and season with pepper. When the mixture has thickened, add the fried potatoes. Mix and turn off fire.

Transfer mixture in the buttered baking dish and pour cream. Sprinkle surface with breadcrumbs and cover with the grated cheese. Bake for 20 minutes and broil top to golden brown.

CCAC CANNING CULINARY ARTS CENTER
[illegible]

Fried 'tilapia' as crispy as 'chicharon'—with sauces

From page C1

Use the same technique as you do with any other fish. Use a half kilo of tilapia as guide. Cooking time is longer for bigger fish, about eight minutes per side for a 1kg tilapia.

Scale and wash fish.

Make two diagonal slits on the fish with a knife, slightly slitting in outer surface. Do this on both sides of the fish.

Heat enough oil in a wok. (Wok has to be submerged in oil). When oil is 350°F put fish in and fry for six minutes per side, without turning it over. Check the bottom side after four minutes just to make sure it isn't burnt. Fish must be dark golden brown.

Insert fish and do the same on the other side.

Drain on paper towels and serve with sauces.

Sauces can be poured on top, but to preserve crispiness longer, serve on the side.

Chili Coriander Sauce

1/3 c water

1 c sugar

1/3 to 1 2 tbsp vinegar

1 tbsp chopped garlic

1 tbsp chopped Thai chili

1 ½ tsp salt

½ c diced red bell pepper

2 tbsp chopped coriander stems

2 tbsp cornstarch

½ c water

In a saucepan, bring all ingredients except for the diced bell pepper to a boil.

Add bell pepper when done.

Process in blender.

Add chopped coriander stems and cornstarch after cool.

Serve fish garnished with coriander sprigs.

Tamarind Sauce

1 c palm sugar*

½ c fish sauce

½ c tamarind water from 30 g unsweetened tamarind pulp* soaked in water for 15 minutes, rubbed and strained

2 tbsp Siamese chili paste

½ c water

Combine ingredients in saucepan.

Bring to a boil and simmer for 15 minutes over low heat.

Adjust to taste—sugar, fish sauce and chili.

Pour over fish and garnish with deep fried scorpion, cilantro sprigs and sliced Thai chilies.

*Available at Lydia's Servers at Chef's Nook, with tel no. 728-3832.

Alamang and Cherry Tomato Sauce

1/3 c chopped garlic

1 c shallots, quartered

1 ½ fresh, washed, salted alamang

½ c brown sugar

1 c water

white sugar to taste

1 sliced chili

1 c whole cherry tomatoes

2 tbsp fish sauce

Combine first seven ingredients in a saucepan.

Bring to a boil and let simmer for 10 minutes.

Add cherry tomatoes, cook for another five minutes.

Adjust seasoning to taste—sugar, salt, pepper.

Put fish over a bed of sliced mustard greens garnished with cherry tomatoes and shallots.

Serve sauce on the side.

I am cooking "Use Seafood, Classic Pampanga Recipes from My Way" and "Gourmet Shop" this week.

My Gourmet Cuisine is from the beginners and household cooks point of view.

Another culinary trip to Pampanga is set in April.

Food historian Lillian Borromeo, culture and history professor Francis Macli and I will teach ancient Pampanga recipes and cooking techniques.

For inquiries, call 926-0286/927-2008, look for Jane; 0917-4744-9908/2372146, look for Doris.

E-mail the author at ingrams@inquirer.com.ph

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What's fine for Divisoria is also fine for Switzerland

DIVISORIA IS STILL A must-stop for cheap materials for even the most lavish wedding, Mylene "Mae" Medina Dolunia, who married Swedish national Conny Dolunius on June 25, 2008, had nuptial events in Manila and Switzerland. It required using materials that mimic nature, Divisoria has plenty of that. She bought bolts and bolts of "lanot" to use as containers for her giveaways, heavenly stockings for the groom' ensembles, and ribbons and tulle of all shades and sizes from Divisoria vendors.

She found pieces of wood for the stroll that would make the invitation a sight to behold.

The best part was she didn't have her pocket when she ended up with 75 kg of wedding materials in a box for flow all the way from Manila to Switzerland.

She and other wedding experts will share their ideas at The Look & Language of Love, a wedding and special events expo, set to July at the Crowne Plaza Hotel and Exhibition Center, New Jersey, USA.

Presented by Macro Management with Odessa Fete Events Specialists and Gobuti, Inc., the expo will provide a one-stop shop for those using the best Filipino products and services in potential overseas customers. E-mail is ing@hotpop.com.

4TH GOLDILOCKS INTERCOLLEGIATE CAKE DECORATING CHALLENGE

LYCEUM OF THE PHILIPPINES - BATANGAS once again capped the Goldilocks Intercollegiate Cake Decorating Challenge. (L-R) Judges Chef Henz Sison, Patrick Tong, Margarita Forés, Chef Alleen Anastacio award Ms this year's winners together with (L-R) Goldilocks endorser, Dingdong Dantes, Mara Yee, Pinky Yee - Marketing Director and Mazie Tansi - Marketing Manager.

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Dim sum combination

Super Bowl of China extends its Dim Sum Combination/Platter promo until April 15. The promo includes 3 pieces Pork Siomai, 2 Hakao, 2 Deep-Fried Wanton, 2 Vegetarian Stirring Fruits, and 1 BBQ Pork Siopao served with sweet and sour sauce and hot vinegar for dipping. Enjoy the 50-peso-off Dim Sum Combinations Platter of-fer in any of the Super Bowl of China branches located at Blue Wave Mandaluyon in Mandaluya City, Glorietta 5, Ayala Center, Makati City; Shoks Atrium Festival Mall, Alabang; Gateway Mall, Quezon City; SM Mall of Asia, Pasay City; Trillionaq Mall North Edsa, Quezon City; Robinsons Place Manila, and SM Megamall. Call 7319888 for delivery.

Marinated abalone

Jasmine at the Renaissance Makati City Hotel Manila offers a la carte and set menus that feature Cantonese dishes like Marinated Baby Abalone with Supreme Oyster Sauce, Braised Shanky Fin with Crabmeat, Wok-Fried Sea Medlin with Dried Chili, Black Bean and Ginger Garlic, Crispy Fried Spicy Pigeon, Wok-Fried Scallops with X.O. Sauce. Jasmine is at 2/L, Renaissance Makati City Hotel, Manila. Call 8146888.

Free 'sisig'

Cowboy Grill gives free sisig to groups of five and up with a minimum order of P400. Just present any proof that you're a graduate of 2009. Call Makati branch at 525-1474; Manila, 523-5183; UN Avenue, 521-7118; Las Piñas, 801-1949; and Ortigas, 999-0111/666.

Delores Custer holds food styling seminar

FOR HER FOOD STYLING SEMINAR in Manila on May 4, international food stylist Delores Custer will share a few of her own recipes. Her style is also a hand stylist; Custer is an excellent cook as well. She graduated with a master's degree in Food and Nutrition from New York University and has styled and developed recipes for some of the big names in the food industry.

Already Custer has seen one recipe in Inquirer Lifestyle, which is organizing the seminar. The dish has been created and tested by some Inquirer staffers, who were unanimous in saying it's delicious. Inquirer contributor Bernice Chellamma scooped the recipe using Magnolia Gold Butter in both the filling and the crust. The recipe will be part of the handouts during the May 4 seminar.

The price of the one-day seminar is P2,500 for early registrants and P3,500 for those registering after April 15. "We're pricing it at a very reasonable cost so that a lot of people can attend," said Jarelle Advincula, Inquirer head of marketing. "It's Inquirer's own way of helping those in the food business to have economically challenging times."

People may register early to avoid disappointment of the discount and because seats may be limited. For more on the seminar, call 9078808 local 3349 or 250 and look for Dolce or Alleza, or e-mail daanesa@inquirer.com.ph.

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*Applicable to individuals only. Not applicable to corporate accounts. Subject to BDO's terms and conditions.

Dining Out

Friday fish fry

Al Sangre, 10 percent discounts, souvenirs and tokens are given to graduates of 2009. Burgos offers dishes like Oklahoma-Style Grilled Baby Back Ribs, Country-Style Fried Chicken, Friday Fish Fry, Seafood Aglio Olio, Spinach Grilled Salmon, Fillet Mignon, Grilled Pork Chops, Grilled Tilapia la Poble, Oyster Parmigiana, Prawn Piccata and Supreme Sampler. Visit Burgos at 1/ Alondo, QC; Power Plant Mall, Makati; The Podium, Ortigas; The Promenade Mall, Greenhills; Gateway Mall, Cubao; Robinsons Galleria, Ortigas; 2000 City, The Block, North Edsa; Mall of Asia, Pasay; and SM City Manila. Call 8017404, 8391819, 6815254, 7260819, 9196112, 5466001 or 6282696.

Bourbon ribs

Bambu Mes Briseño Restaurant gives 10-percent discounts and freebies to all graduates who will dine at the resto starting today till mid-April and present any certificate of graduation or diploma. Indulge in Four Seasons Salad, Baked Artichoke with Spinach Dip, Bourbon Ribs, Bacon Stuffed Crabs, Fish and Chips, Ultimate Seafood Feast, Barbecued Shrimps, Super Salmon Pizza, Seafood Jambalaya and Seafood Combo. Bambu is at Entresimienti Hall, SM Mall of Asia; The Block, SM City, North Edsa; Robinsons Place, Manila (Midtown), and Ateneo Bldg., Katipunan Road. Call 8388208, 8322130, 8871888 and 6362013.

Turkish chicken thighs

Sophia's services include Grilled Lamb Chops, Tandoori Chicken Thighs, Lamb Shank Alfredo, Greek-Style Roast Chicken, Veal Lemon, Osso Buco and Kiraz Kadhisi. For lighter seafood choices, Two Fried Fish Fillet in olive oil or tomato and Grilled Tiger Prawns. For a selection of six dishes, Sophia's with-jake-On good-costs a P300 Pawnshoppe gift certificate. Sophia's is at Weyngate Center, Commerce Avenue, Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa. Call 7717712.

Buffalo shrimps with blue cheese

Heaven & Eggs features Seafood Crossover Revivals. The Seafood Basket. The promo offers calamari, fish fillet and shrimps, Buffalo Shrimps with Blue cheese dressing, Fish 'N Chips, Salt and Pepper Squid Spiral, and Hawaiian Fish Teriyaki. Oprie's Country Fried Fish Steak, Shrimp Pasta in Saffron Cream Sauce, and Paella Lobster and Shrimp in Cold Pacific Salad. Heaven & Eggs is at Glorietta 4, Ayala Center (8182182); Eastwood City Libis (9121172); Tomas Morato (3362674); and Trinoma Mall (9013808).

Steak and shrimp

Chili's offers all graduates a 15-percent discount until April 30. Just present your valid school ID. Chili's has Steak & Shrimp, Baby Back Ribs and White Chocolate Molten Cake. Call its branches at Greenbelt 3, Makati, 7268223; Northeast Greenhills, 7212886; and Tomas Morato, QC. 9726811.

Hot diggidy dogs

Conga Grille Restaurant offers new selections for kids such as Chinese-style spaghetti, Pizzarific pita bread, Burgaretties, Hot Diggidy Dogs, Macaroni and Cheese, and Chicken Crispers with Honey Mustard. Call 7719886, 4084826.

Free nachos

Tia Maria's Super Sangria Platter comes with: honey maples of barbecue pork, chicken wings, shrimp flambe, taquitos or small tacos and tacitos dips. Served with guacamole, salsa and sour cream dips, the platter is also best enjoyed with any of the restaurant's flavored margaritas or mantas, which can be enjoyed by the pitcher or glass. For graduates, Tia Maria's is giving free nachos for groups of five and more during any of its branches with a minimum order of P400. Just present any proof that you are this year's graduate. Call SM Megamall Annex at 6352305; Makati, 5208439; Festival Supermall, 6008502; and Cubao-Kalayaan, 4362368.

Yakiniku rice plate

UCC Café offers Set Meals, Real Deals, Monday-Friday, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. and 6-9 p.m. Customers get to choose from three versions of the day which are served with Soup of the day, coffee or tea, and dessert. Selection includes Japanese Fusion dishes like Yakiniku Rice Plate, Hamburg Curry with Rice and Fried Pusen Curry Rice. Promo available at UCC Vienna Café at The Podium and Greenbelt 5; UCC Café Terrace at The Fort, Rockwell, Paseo Center and Alabang; and UCC Park Café in Glorietta Park.

Themed buffets

Diamond Hotel Philippines' Palm Court Café invites graduates to dine for free when purchasing of the buffet in a group of six or more for lunch or dinner. Choose from the daily themed buffets featuring American fare on Mondays, Italian dishes every Tuesday, Filipino foods on Wednesdays, Spanish delicacies every Thursday, Thai-that'sness flavors on Fridays, Korean specialties every Saturday, and boho buffet of Japanese every Sunday. Everyone gets one complimentary round of soft drinks, iced tea or chilled juices. Diamond Hotel Philippines is at Roxas Boulevard cor. Dr. J Quirino St., Manila. Call 5238000, 5263000.

McDonald's Breakfast with Grade-A Eggs

Complete the most important meal of the day with egg-sential celebrations from McDonald's Breakfast Menu. Every Hotcake with Egg, Egg McMuffin, and Sausage McMuffin with Egg is made with only the freshest and highest quality ingredients. Here are some fun facts that makes McDonald's hotcakes an egg-citing!

McDonald's serves only certified A-grade eggs with each one going through the rigorous candling process. Selected eggs have shells without any cracks or irregularities. They are then washed and re-rinsed with sanitized oil to ensure they are clean. All throughout the cleaning and cooking process, the eggs are kept in a temperature-controlled environment. This prevents bacteria like e.coli and salmonella, which thrive in warmer temperatures, from contaminating the eggs.

McDonald's customers have come to expect how A-grade eggs look and taste. A-grade eggs have thick whites and round well-centered, protruded yolks. They are fresh and tasty, down to the last bite.

Customers can enjoy A-grade eggs with selections from the McDonald's Grab-N-Go Breakfast Menu. Choose from all-time classics - Sausage McMuffin with Egg, and Egg McMuffin, or the new favorite Hotcake with Egg. Partnered with McDonald's Premium Roast Coffee made from 100% Arabica beans, McDonald's customers can start their day with nothing but the best meals made with the highest quality ingredients at affordable prices.

Have a graduation blast at Texas Roadhouse Grill!

Voucher to Batch 2009 from Texas Roadhouse Grill, as they offer a 10% discount to all graduates from now until April 30, 2009. Graduates only need to present their school ID as proof of the promo.

Rustle up your favorite steak and friends and ask for TEXAS ROADHOUSE GRILL's bestselling The Great Ribeye, a hefty 10-oz. slab of succulence grilled to your liking, served with fresh veggies and mashed potatoes. Also try their other fantastic steak selections, such as the Tenderloin Steak Strips. If you're not into steaks, you can also have a dig at their other grilled specialties down the way of the Wild West.

Try their Shrimp & Salmon Skewer: three skewers of juicy shrimp & salmon grilled and seasoned with Roadhouse herbs and spices served on a bed of Texas rice and fresh veggies. Top it off with their Mighty Oreo Mud Pie, layers of rich coffee and chocolate ice cream with fresh-from-candy pieces atop a crushed Oreo cookie crumbed drizzled with chocolate sauce.

Celebrate your special occasions at TEXAS ROADHOUSE GRILL in these locations: Bldg 1., Rockface High Street, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig (Tel 856-1347/856-2699); or at El Pueblo Real de Manila, Ruby Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig (633-6715 to 16).

Magnetic new menu at Mag:net

By Jerome Gomez
Contributor

FROM THE MULTITUDE OF ARTISTS and the future of the nation: it's a tall task, but this has been painter and cafe proprietor Bodek Dalisay's job since opening Mag:net Gallery and Cafe in Katipunan's university strip in 2005. While the place is known to showcase the works of some of the Slipper, most-exciting-edge names on the scene, edible selling magazines and books is endless and Quezon City's reading class, food was never really top-of-mind reason to visit this joint across Miriam College. This, Bodek hopes, is about to change.

Mag:net has just launched its refurbished menu prepared by young chef Nino Laus. When before the food was mostly an aside in the form and fancy set talk, or to nightly performances by bands and poets, Dalisay is confident its new dishes will be a good score on.

"Mag:net has always had a very high standard for the art it shows," says Dalisay. "So I wanted the culinary aspect of Mag:net to be an art form as well." Laus, he thought, made this possible.

A graduate of St. Benilde's Hotel and Restaurant Management school, Laus, 27, already owns a restaurant, Ku'Ali Persian Cuisine on Katipunan Road. Native cuisine is Laus' passion and expertise—served on Mag:net's Lazelle Sharon-designed plates.

While its 60's feast is a French-Japanese fusion affair, Mag:net's new menu is ifil-ipino in concept but European- and Japanese-in execution. Ifil Tinapang Dory for example, is a salty and soft fillet of fish on soft tofu pureed to resemble a caviar crème sauce. It is flavored by a unnerving trifecta of soy sauce and dalandan juice. It has become a favorite. The right of rice wine, a fat-arching, the simple and straightforward, smell, tempting to go home to bedroom fast one. Dillon said he savored an explosive the first time he tried it. "The taste was just beautifully overwhelming," he explained.

EXCLUSIVE: Coffee Spiced Sub Grilled Chicken Leg

Tinapang Dory, Choc Nut Kare-kareng Liempo—it's now eating edge menu in hip café

Playful

A few more attractions on the menu are equally playful renders: the mini-battered baluts, the lobster-wrapped peanut wontons, served with squid, quail egg, cherry tomatoes and bonito flakes.

Laus is particularly proud of his Chicken Leg rubbed with Coffeberry Coffee, which may look dark at first glance but is certainly not burnt. The rubbe gives the tender chicken its surprising sweetness, enhanced even more by the heat of sauce points curiously forward with what it is served.

Not a salad fan? Laus' Bagoong Balayan Caesar's baked is a delicious reason to convert. This version has a delicious slightly creamy dressing that has just the right hint of the bagoong, and among the fresh greens is a wealth of sautéed seafood and julienned mangoes. An ingenious way to stick you to eat your greens. (some words back, on these pages, a headline about the kare-kareng liempo appeared. It was a misprint.)

Not to be outdone by the mains, Laus' dessert menu is

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Brahma Kamaris cooking demo

Brahma Kamaris will hold a cooking demo on March 28, 9 a.m. to 12 noon. The menu includes creamy mushrooms with broccoli, asparagus with banana blossoms, sweet and sour vegetables, vegetarian spaghetti and lumpiang gulay, baked and boiled egg stuffed in pandan mixed in noodles. Visit Brahma Kamaris at 7484 Dagohoy, San Antonio Village, Makati. Call 8907900.

Midtown shindig

Midtown at Robinsons Place Manila will hold a shindig on March 27, 8 p.m. to midnight. This two summer-crazed bash will be happening at Midtown's al fresco area.

Earth hour

From 8:30 to 9:30 p.m. on March 28, customers can enjoy scrumptious dining experience at Max's.

WHAT'S UP

Restaurant joins the whole world for Earth Hour 2009. Max's will dim the lights in most of its branches nationwide and turn off their billboard lights along major roads for one hour.

Health Tourism Congress

On March 26-28, the Wanah Health Tourism Congress will be held at Manila Philippine Plaza. Around 100 experts and medical travel providers from all over the world are expected to participate in the business to business sessions.

Will traffic jams be an everyday event on SLEX?

THE CONSUMER

MOTORISTS WHO USE THE SOUTH LUZON Expressway (SLEX) believe the almost daily horrible traffic jams that started March 13 could have been avoided with little planning and more attention to their welfare and convenience.

It seems that although the people working on the extension southward of SLEX have been laying the groundwork for several months, they were oblivious to other people who have been doing so for the very busy highway.

The company working on the project reportedly narrowed the major thoroughfare and created choke points from Alabang to Bicutan, seemingly unconcerned that thousands of vehicles pass through SLEX every day.

It does not help the government's effort to keep the economy buoyant if both manpower and employees of the country's industries and businesses are stuck in traffic on SLEX for hours on end, wasting precious time and money. Fortunately, there does not seem to have been a major case of road rage so far.

I read senior Rodolfo Vergara suggests that, in the meantime, the SLEX administration should consider opening the Skyway to all private vehicles (except cargo trucks and buses) while construction is ongoing to ease traffic. Users should be charged lower rates for the road below the elevated thoroughfare.

Vergara pointed out that cargo vans inside the Skyway "terribly underutilized."

If the contractors of SLEX are anything like those people working on Metrobid pipe laying projects, motorists should really be concerned and management should think of ways to ease the motorists' difficulties. Alternative routes did not offer much relief as there were also diggings every 10 meters or so.

A taxi driver was even asking if they would open re-open Vito Cruz St. (at Pablo Ocampo, in the city of Manila exit) to, which has been under repair for what seems like forever.

Award to aspire for

The World Health Organization (WHO) announced recently that two South Korean cities, Seongbuk and Jinju, won in an international competition for the best public sanitary facilities in the Western Pacific region, which includes the Philippines.

Seongbuk, part of the capital of Seoul, invested large sums of money to rehabilitate and upgrade government-operated facilities and those in public institutions. The number of public toilets had grown from 129 in 2000 to 201 in 2008, for a population of about 460,000. Seongbuk also constructed restrooms to ensure safety to facilities and to make them more accessible to disabled people, the elderly, children and foreign visitors.

Jinju more than tripled the number of its public toilets for a population of about 340,000. A program of customer training and regular inspections ensured that the facilities were well maintained and hygienic.

The awards were given by WHO with The Alliance for Healthy Cities, as part of the World Toilet Summit & Expo 2008. It is hard to imagine that a Philippine city will ever win in this competition. Toilets are among the most neglected facilities in this country.

The WHO said "the provision of public toilets is not just a service to the public but promotes a cleaner, safer and more healthful urban environment. On the other hand, lack of toilets may, to some extent, discourage some people from leaving their homes for long periods of time or visiting their favorite eating for from their hotels, with a loss of income for local businesses."

Feedback

Grace Francisco of Quezon City agrees with Zenaida Damero, who said in a previous column that cashiers should not be food servers. Francisco wants to add that they should also not double as porters. "It is also a common practice of food chains to let their food servers to clean dirty floors. They serve food without washing their hands first after [mopping the floor] or cleaning tables..."

Send letters to The Consumer, Lifestyle section, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 1998 Chino Roces Ave. cor. Mascardo and Tapia Sts., 1204 Makati City; fax 897-8793/94; or e-mail lbolalo@inquirer.com.ph

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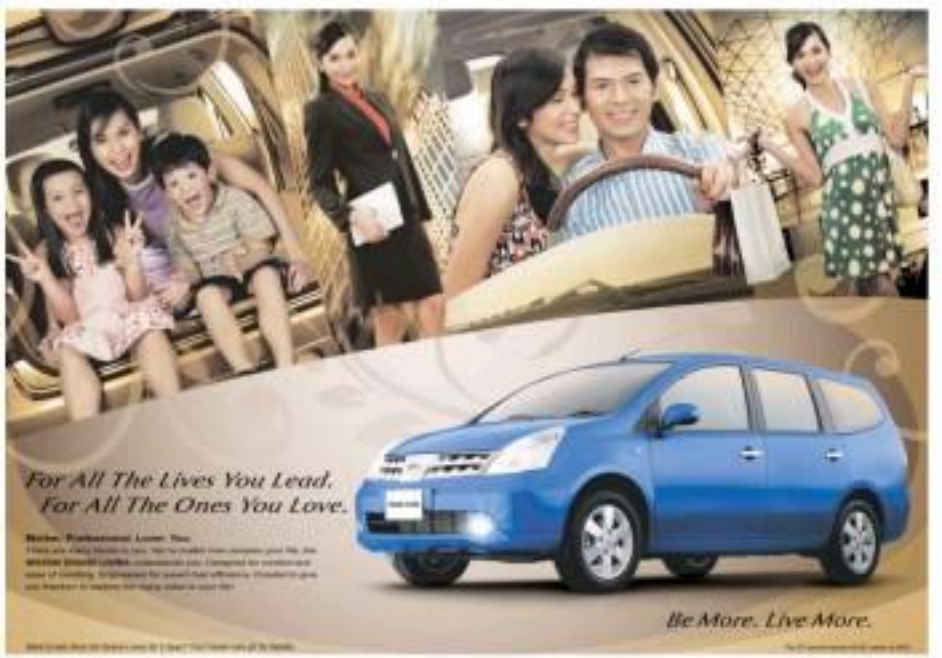

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Season 8 of '24'

HONG KONG—Kiefer Sutherland will be back to play Jack Bauer for an eighth season of the hit counter-terrorism drama "24," but the show's longevity will depend on its writers, the actor said Tuesday. Sutherland, 42, told The Associated Press that shooting starts in May. AP

DID YOU KNOW...

NIKKI (Grie ushout [L] and Iya Villania [L, right photo] with batch mates on graduation day

30 awards and counting

RP marks winning year in world cinema

By Rayani San Diego Jr.

FILM YEAR 2007-2008 WAS A LANDmark period for Philippine movies, according to Nonoy Lauzon, UP Film Institute director/professor.

"Last year, the Philippines won at least 30 international film awards," Lauzon said.

The bumper crop, said Lauzon, is a fitting commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the country's first recognition in an interna-

BIZ 24

Nikki, Iya happy college grads

By Marinel R. Cruz

GIVE ALMOST QUIT GROWING... SAID NIKKI GIL, who suffered chronic bacterial infection juggling roles as a TV host, singer, actress and college student.

"There were days when I'd go straight to school from work—without sleep, without eating a bath. I asked myself, 'Why am I doing this?' Then I'd break into tears," Nikki told Inquirer Entertainment on Monday.

On-to-law school

On March 28, Nikki will graduate with an English Literature degree from the Ateneo de Manila University. She intends to go to law school.

"Whenever I felt exhausted, I reminded myself that I was getting broke other people only dream of," she said. "I thought of God's blessings. This gave me the strength to continue."

Nikki, 21, is a regular host of the Sunday variety show "SOAP 39" and a mainstay of the drama program "Press."

Valedictorian

Nikki (Mexico Pradeno Sunico Gil) finished high school in 2006 at the Dalcroze Christian Training Center in batch valedictorian. She was singing in a church choir when an agent spotted her.

A year later, she starred in a Coca Cola TV commercial that set off her showbiz career. She went on to record her self-titled debut CD, and became part of the cast of singers in the Asian version of the "High School Musical 2" (to hit Disney Channel TV series) soundtrack album.

In 2008, she joined Toni Gonzaga and Bianca Gonzalez to host the reality show "Pinoy Dream Academy." Soon, she will be seen in the soap "Thalaiah" and the indie film "LSSS," opposite Marvin Agustin.

Nikki said getting up school for work was never an option. She explained: "I feel an appreciation with my client. He said to me, 'If you stop studying, you also quit from his." Nikki is also a recording artist of Polyfun Records.

What's cooking?

Nikki's fellow ABS-CBN artist Iya Villania, 22, who graduated with a BS Psychology degree from De La Salle University last February, also never considered giving up school in favor of showbiz. Apart from being host of two ABS-CBN shows ("SOAP '39," "Us Girls") and DJ on the music channel MYX, Iya is a Viva Records artist.

"There's no better feeling than having gone through it. I wanted to prove that it is possible to study and work to show Iya at the same time," said the 5ft Australian actress.

NIKKI G.I.

WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS

MONSTERS VS. ALIENS MONSTER ACADEMY

An evening with Tony Blair

SUNDAY EVENING AT THE SOFITEL Philippine Plaza, theater and dance artists came together for a very special show in honor of a very special guest. These were artists who had a unique and memorable connection with the United Kingdom—as students (in drama, dance or design) or professionals (exchanges such as "Miss Saigon" or "Smoke Pacific"), and who kept a very soft spot in their hearts for that wonderful country.

So far back as the third quarter of 2008, during rap talent week "Cinderella," Freddie Santos called to ask if I would be interested in performing for former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, should he, indeed, visit the Philippines in March 2009.

My initial reply was one of regret, since I would be on tour until very late April. But fortuitously, in December 2008, I was told time and venue would end in January instead. As soon as I was home, I sent Dave Pearl, in a text message, asking if there was still a spot for me on that roster of performers. Thankfully, there was.

The performance (part of the 2nd Annual Infinity Awards given by Smart Infinity) would last for about 40 minutes and would include numbers by Ina Alvarez, Philip Intsalan, Arielle Tanseng, Sheila Francisco, Andie Concepcion, Bobbie Guevara, Miki Infante, Carla Orosa, Robert Seña, Michael Williams, Philippine Ballet Theatre, and myself. The Freddie would direct, with music direction by Gerard Salonga.

Repertoire

Several production meetings were held to determine the repertoire. All the songs had to be either written by British composers, or some from a production staged in the UK, or be directed from a work based on a British novel.

Practice, practice

We had rehearsals scheduled over four days, covering music, script, technical elements and blocking. I had to go over an audio-visual presentation that required five narrations. On the last two days of rehearsal, we ran through the show at least twice a day. On performance day itself, we had a stage adjustment and sound check before running over the entire program twice.

As Tim Freddie told us over and over again in rehearsal, "Practice makes permanent."

BACK STORY

Lou Salonga

Also in spun the afternoon getting into hair and makeup. The actual awards ceremony hosted by Johnny Litton and Toni Gonzaga, who under very Oscar-lite circumstances in her awkward finery, it was time to get the game face on and focus on the task at hand. The "game face" would be different for each performer: some were introspective, quietly rehearsing their songs and blocking; others were chatty and chuffing, to keep nerves at bay.

After a round of "Break a leg" greetings, I said a little prayer (with over my lyrics and spirit, and went to stage forward and hydrated.

Once the show opened with "Seventy Seven Beverly Hills" from "Nine," it just kept going. Tightly paced and compact, it was one song and quiet after another. I sang along with a medley especially with "Smoke, O Namie" from "The Girl, the Male and the Watchful."

His Blair was incredibly appreciative—which, in turn, was incredibly encouraging. I was proud of all the singers and dancers that night. They were fine examples of Filipino artistic excellence.

Many thanks to Arlo Carvalho and everyone from Smart Infinity, and to The Peddle for the phone call. I had an absolutely fabulous time!

C-H-E-E-R-S

Congratulations to Atlantic Productions for its current hit, "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee"! Its a guest speller on opening night (along with The Inner Four stars Ami Pangan). I had a blast. The show is incredibly funny.

I'll definitely be back for another helping. I LURRVE it.

Pinoy in Action

See, Pia Cayetano sent me this invitation, and I would like to send it to you in turn.

To mark the International Women's Month of March, Pinoy in Action is inviting women to join the country's biggest and only all-women's run on March 29, 6 a.m., at the SM Mall of Asia Grounds.

The event, now in its fourth year, will showcase healthy living, women's rights, empowerment, health and wellness. Awards and prizes are at stake. Call 0927-404-5167 or 09171-855-4487; email pinoyinaction@gmail.com; or visit www.pinoyinaction.com.

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IMAX
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SEA MONSTER

PODIUM
12 ROUNDS
KNOWING
LATE SCREENINGS

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www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

GALLERIA

1 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN
2 THE SECRET of MOONACRE / TAKEN
3 KNOWING
4 12 ROUNDS
5 THE PUNISHER
6 NEW IN TOWN
7 LONG KHONG
8 [illegible]
9 SUNDO
10 WATCHMEN / THE UNBORN

ERMITA

1 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN
2 12 ROUNDS
3 KNOWING
4 LONG KHONG
5 THE SECRET of MOONACRE / THE PUNISHER
6 NEW IN TOWN
7 SUNDO

METRO EAST

1 THE UNBORN
2 KNOWING
3 12 ROUNDS
4 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN
5 NEW IN TOWN
6 SUNDO
7 THE PUNISHER
8 LONG KHONG

NOVALICHES

1 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN
2 KNOWING
3 12 ROUNDS
4 SUNDO

PIONEER

1 SUNDO
2 KNOWING
3 12 ROUNDS
4 NEW IN TOWN

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WATCH 29 SUNDO! - 400 TO 430 PM
BALLROOM CINEMA LOBBY
MOVIEWORLD

STA. ROSA

1 GRAN TORINO
2 KNOWING
3 12 ROUNDS
4 SUNDO

LIPA

1 SUNDO
2 RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN
3 YOU CHANGED MY LIFE
4 WATCHMEN

DASMARINAS

1 KNOWING
2 12 ROUNDS
3 SUNDO
4 RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN

IMUS

1 RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN
2 KNOWING
3 12 ROUNDS
4 SUNDO

ANGELES

1 KNOWING
2 12 ROUNDS
3 SUNDO
4 RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN

STARMILLS

1 KNOWING
2 12 ROUNDS
3 SUNDO
4 RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN
5 YOU CHANGED MY LIFE
6 THE UNBORN

BACOLOD

1 12 ROUNDS
2 KNOWING
3 SUNDO
4 GRAN TORINO
5 RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN
6 WATCHMEN

ILOILO

1 12 ROUNDS
2 KNOWING
3 SUNDO
4 YOU CHANGED MY LIFE
5 RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN
6 WATCHMEN

NOW SHOWING

MOVIEWORLD

Nikki, Iya happy college grads

From page D1

Iya, or Kadene Elaine Binder Villeta, grew up in Sydney like parents Boy and Elena, are both of Filipino descent.

Iya began singing at an early age. By the time she turned 13, she had already performed as front act for visiting concert performers like Nate Newcombe, Marnie Stevens and the Ayo Hilking Sydney to Sydney.

Game show host

She joined local show biz as a host of "Game Channel," an interactive game show on IBC 13. There she was offered to join GMA-7's youth-oriented program "Click." In 2006 she moved over to ABS-CBN and joined MTV.net "Seasons of Love," another youth program.

Her film credits include the thriller Underwear BC Connection starring "When I Met U."

Last year, Iya rounded her debut album, "Finally."

Psychology Iya said, has been helping her adjust to the different personalities she meets at work. "I really reason to say it is the 'real world,' like when I join a hospital or have my own clinic or become a counselor. I was just lucky I could apply some of what I've learned in show biz," said Iya, who was scrupulously coy she doesn't his own with her busy schedule.

"I ALWAYS say that school keeps my brain awake," says Nikki Gil.

Similarly, Nikki found her pre-law course useful. "I'm a TV host. I have to read a lot. As a TV personality keeping people interested is linguistics," she explained.

If she weren't in show biz, Nikki would either be studying law or working in an advertising agency. "Away from the limelight," she stressed. "When I was small, I made commercials with my siblings and cousins. We invented products and made tag lines for them."

Iya, on the other hand, said she always imagined herself delving deeper into psychology. She may take up a master's degree, she said, "or put up my own clothing business, restaurant or a small school for kids."

As for, finishing college means no more town papers to submit or science books to read. Instantly. "But I will miss the pressure of hearing deadlines," she admitted.

"I always say that school keeps my brain awake," added Nikki. "I will miss going to the library. I practically lived there."

While both girls believe they'll be bigger stars now if not for school, they maintained they have no regrets.

"I think my pacing was just right," said Nikki. "I wanted things to happen for me slowly but surely that were it not for school, I'd have more time to hone my craft. I'd have time to accept more projects."

Iya recounted: "I had to weigh a lot of factors. There were offers that conflicted with my shoot schedule. I prioritized my studies."

But Nikki would not have it any other way. "If I do get there and attain big stardom, I can proudly say I deserved it," she said.

(Pix courtesy of AZ Productions, Mike's, Star Magic)

Email nerza@inquirer.com.ph

Of seminal human impulses

From page D1

from comedy, especially of the sexual sort. Even this terrible Comedy bilies pittsburgh or bumptious overlords and other flawed "Americans." By casting these clones to star, we rob them of their intimidating fangs and inferno...and our frustration is resoundingly delightful.

Then there's our need for love, which is exploited by all of the romantic dramas and comedies we view on the tube. This emotional aspect is particularly strong because it is designed to answer the survival of the human race. Despite the fact the world's population is now nearing the seven billion mark, love and sex still hit the spot!

The popularity of sports and "survival" reality shows further underscores our perceived need to win, to crush the competition, whether it's human or force of nature.

Diverse programs are similarly oriented in their appeal, due to our mind or master the unknown.

Gossip shows are popular because they exploit and bolster our need to know intimate details of people's private lives, especially if they're celebrities. This celebrity fixation further plugs into another need: for us to "power" that even powerful people like stars have their "off day." What does this achieve? This cut down to size, stars no longer seem to be so much better off than us "ordinary" folks—and that's "comforting."

But we all need to be reminded that gossip is not just an expedient, it can also ensure popular and psychological injury to its victims, and that should be no concern at all...to anyone.

Pro-people stance

ABS-CBN's new motives (It for

FEEDBACK

Suggested titles for Cebu Ad's US movie

From: Rommel Limbaia, Wilshire, Los Angeles, California

Good day. I read [Rayan] Jim Delgaviel story about the new movie of Cebu Ad Castillo, "Do Filipinos Cry in America?" Discourse, 3/15/09). I'm so curious about this production, which I'm sure will make us Filipinos in America proud.

But I hope Cebu changes the title, as it would appeal better to movie offcionados when it is released here as well as internationally. My suggestions are, "Lost Identity in America," or simply "Identity." What do you think?

I'm just concerned about the future of this movie as the title. Take "Dhanday Milionaryo." There was no mention of India or Mumbai in the title but the movie drew the viewers' attention when a man stirred [illegible].

Best regards.

Ayala Malls Greenbelt
Robinsons Galleria
Ayala Malls Manila Bay
Ayala Malls Feliz
Ayala Malls Vertis North
Ayala Malls Circuit
Ayala Malls Capitol Central
Ayala Malls Marquee
Ayala Malls Arnaiz Avenue
Ayala Malls Solenad
Ayala Malls Manila Bay
Ayala Malls Cloverleaf
Ayala Malls Harbor Point
Ayala Malls Serin
Ayala Malls Nuvali
Ayala Malls Westgate
Ayala Malls Capitol Commons
Ayala Malls Fairview Terraces
Ayala Malls Trinoma
Ayala Malls Manila Bay

GREENHILLS CINEMAS
THEATRE NO. 1
1 2
PROMENADE
3 4 5

Letterman marries longtime girlfriend

LOS ANGELES—DAVID LETTERMAN SAID HE AND LONG-time girlfriend Regina Lasko had a bumpy trip to matrimony last week. During a replay Monday of CBS' "Late Show," Letterman said he and Lasko married March 18 at the Tecate County Courthouse in Tecate, Mexico, but only after their truck got stuck on a muddy road. They didn't take an immediate honeymoon. The host was back in New York on Monday to deliver the news—and a few jokes about the marriage. AP

CHEER FACTOR

POWER PLANT CINEMA

THE PUNISHER: WARZONE - R13	NEW IN TOWN - PG13	12 ROUNDS - PG13
THE SECRET OF MOONACRE - GP	RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN - GP	KNOWING - PG13

SHOWS & SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

30 awards and counting

Front page B1

tional film festival."

In 1992, Lumbera's brilliant "El Legado" won the Grande de Oro award at the 1st Bilbao International Festival of Documentary and Short Film, screened this Saturday in San del Mundo.

In 1963, Avellana won the same award in Bilbao for "La Cartagena de Indias," added Del Mundo, who is currently writing a book about the country's first National Artist for Film.

Lamberto and Avellana won the Grand Prize at the Asian Film Festival in Hong Kong for "Noah Dahlia" in 1958 and Best Director for "Badjao" at the 1959 Southeast Asian Film Fest in Tokyo. "Avellana's previous awards were from regional festivals, making Bilbao the first international honor," Lumbera pointed out.

According to film historian Soledad Go, the country normally sees 30 awards in various international festivals per year.

The figure could be bigger if the Philippine-Icelandic production "The Amazing Truth About Queen Raquela," which won the Teddy Award at the Berlin film fest, is counted in, as well as the triumph of "Mamalo" in a CNN poll in Best Asia Pacific Film of All Time.

Only three months into 2009, the country has climbed six more honors, for 2008 films, for a total of 30 to date.

Among the top-notchers are Cinemalaya entries "Jay" five international awards; "Boxing Dancer," "Kubrador," three; "Colorum," two; and "God Only Knows," one.

A SCENE from "Boxing," winner of three awards

A perennial winner is filmmaker Denis Murcheo who has brought home several awards for three different films: "Water Child," "Tender" and "Stubby."

Almost all the winners are independent films, except for one: Raquel Fabor "Yanna Zamorada Jo Mosuch," which topped a gay and lesbian fest held in Calgary, Canada.

"These awards reflect the resiliency of the local movie industry, which has thrived despite the naysayers' predictions and the obstacles in its way," Rolando S. Arienza, chair of the Film Development Council of the Philippines told business. "This record-breaking year shows not only the resiliency of local filmmakers, but also their excellence."

E-mail: bapunisondaga@hotmail.com

MMTA MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

GREENHILLS CINEPLEX	GREENHILLS CINEMAS	SHANGRI-LA CINEPLEX
12 ROUNDS - PG13	12 ROUNDS - PG13	12 ROUNDS - PG13
NEW IN TOWN - PG13	NEW IN TOWN - PG13	NEW IN TOWN - PG13
RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN - GP	RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN - GP	RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN - GP
KNOWING - PG13	KNOWING - PG13	KNOWING - PG13
THE SECRET OF MOONACRE - GP	THE SECRET OF MOONACRE - GP	THE SECRET OF MOONACRE - GP
THE PUNISHER: WARZONE - R13	THE PUNISHER: WARZONE - R13	THE PUNISHER: WARZONE - R13
TAKEN - PG13	TAKEN - PG13	TAKEN - PG13
THE BOY IN THE STRIPED PYJAMAS - PG13	THE BOY IN THE STRIPED PYJAMAS - PG13	THE BOY IN THE STRIPED PYJAMAS - PG13

Walter Mart

PG-13
From the director of DIE HARD 2 and the producer of SPEED
JOHN CENA
12 ROUNDS
NOW SHOWING

EASTWOOD CINEMAS

12 ROUNDS - PG13	NEW IN TOWN - PG13	KNOWING - PG13
TAKEN - PG13	RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN - GP	KNOWING - PG13

ULTRA 7

SHANG CINEPLEX

1. TAKEN PG-13 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00
2. 12 ROUNDS PG-13 1:45, 4:20, 6:55, 9:30
3. RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN GP 2:05, 4:25, 6:35, 8:45
4. KNOWING (SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING) 1:45, 4:20, 7:00, 9:40
5. THE BOY IN THE STRIPED PYJAMAS PG-13 2:45, 4:50, 6:55, 9:00

MONSTERS VS ALIENS
MONSTERS ACADEMY
MARCH 28, 10AM - 1PM
GRAND ATRIUM, LEVEL3

#1 MOVIE IN AMERICA
FACT: Major catastrophes are happening everyday around the world killing millions.
THERE MUST BE A REASON
NICOLAS CAGE
KNOWING
NOW SHOWING

Love happens in the most unexpected places.
Renée Zellweger
NEW IN TOWN
PG-13
NOW SHOWING

3RD WEEK
EVIL WILL DO ANYTHING TO LIVE
R-13
UNBORN

GARFIELD — By Jim Davis

AL LIPIN — By Jos Lapeña

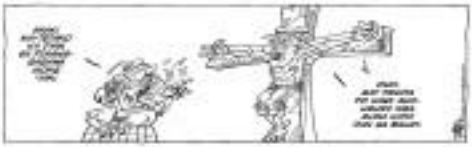
PUGAD BABOY — By Pol Junior

DICK TRACY

LOVEHONETTE — By Elizabeth Chionglo

JAMES BOND

DIVINE COMEDY — By Ethen Pabalinas



BABY BLUES — By Jerry Scott

TULOOK — By Pasha Cou

BEN — By Dang Shelton

STOMO AND WEEGY — By Ura-Garcillano

EXCO MACHINE — By Mang Ambra

HOROSCOPE

By Frances Drake

ARIES (March 21 to April 19). Today is the only New Moon in your sign until April 18. Take immediate steps to get back to long-lost friends and decide how you can improve your appearance.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20). Even if you don't mind your behavior is annoying others. This is the perfect day to get in touch with volunteer. It is that gets you through this night.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20). You have a chance to make some changes in your life. Once you've the New Moon in your sign, you can't afford to take chances and guess. That's what's happening for you today! Dream big!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22). Today is the perfect day to look at your life in relation to personal and social matters. If your life is not what you're headed. What do you really want to accomplish most lifetime?

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22). Is there you kind of loving, but rhythm and pleasure? Take social pursuits and romance your act in your life it personal? Perhaps investing adventure itself?

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22). What can you do to clear up loose ends now, especially with old associations and situations such as insurance, inheritances, wills, taxes and debts. Delete something.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22). This is the time when Moon opposite your sign all year. Now is the time to check about how to improve your closest friendships and partnerships.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21). What can you do to improve your job, or your attitude toward your job? Think of few things you would like to accomplish.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21). Do you have a quiet, self-fulfilling day at work, and also? If you have problems, an unfair situation or someone who is not to you, this is New Moon focuses on this.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19). What can you do to improve your relationship with family members, parents or your home? While these issues, and try to do them in the near future.

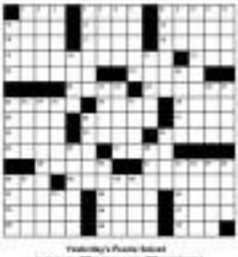
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18). Do not overlook others always underestimated you. Think how often you underestimate others. Be sure to clear to you call to fill your communication.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20). What is your attitude toward money? Do you attitude toward things adventures how they manifest in our lives.

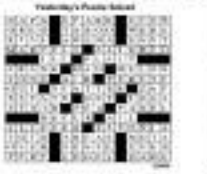
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS
1) Teacher's aid
4) Feed with scraps
8) Ship's pole
12) Bloodsucking parasite
13) Make laugh
14) Slightly open
15) Wrong
16) Do it
17) Place half of Presidents
18) Hook
20) Post Washington is (Abbreviation)
21) Poke lovingly in the ribs
22) Monkey
24) Trustworthy
25) Changing sound
27) Solitary existence
29) Glare
31) Like sports announcer
34) Bridesmaid's honorary
35) Emperor's (Emperor's)
37) Fan's winning cheers
38) Fisherman's need
39) Turbulent disturbance
40) Knock
41) Adult fairy
43) Make tense
44) Sweet ingredient
45) Ice
46) Nutritional
47) Student's partner in chemistry
48) Piggy on Pooh
49) Delight
50) Tender, emotional
51) Abuse
52) Nature's recreation
53) Nonviolence
54) Sweeney
55) Ignore, pretend
56) Tide

DOWN
1) Lackadaisical
2) Not suitable
3) Nerve signal
4) Accustomed
5) Tolerate, back
6) Make blue
7) Potential economic
8) Ancient Greek or Roman public square
9) One who believes in predestination
10) Ancient Egyptian sun goddess
11) Pinata
12) "Yes," to Yo
13) Musical notation
14) Lamb's pen
15) Plant milk as in cows
16) Phobia
17) Death, for one
18) Cookie-cutter shop
19) Play-by-play
20) Pride
21) Relative to body
22) Place of learning, often
23) By ... mechanics
24) Jane Addams
25) Fancy car
26) Manhattan home
27) Fashion
28) Puzzle
29) Ice
30) Original and whole
31) Wedding
32) ... Lang
33) Traveler's guide
34) Lemony
35) Fifty pounds
36) Hallucinations
37) Bucket contents
38) Spotted
39) Dramatic expression
40) Fine mist



Yesterday's Puzzle Solved



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CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis SudoKu — By Dave Green

		1			3	7	4	
		2	8				1	6
8				9				
						3	2	
				1				
	9	8						
				7				4
1	5				9	2		
	7	3	6			8		

Difficulty Level ★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

1	2	5	3	6	5	4	7	8
6	8	3	4	7	9	2	1	6
9	7	4	8	1	2	5	9	3
2	6	5	1	9	3	6	4	7
3	8	1	2	4	7	9	8	5
4	9	7	5	8	6	1	3	2
7	1	8	6	2	4	3	5	9
5	4	2	9	3	8	7	6	1
9	3	6	7	5	1	8	2	4

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Keep friendship strong– don't date the same types

By Marinell H. Cruz

TEDDY DON'T DATE THE same type of girls, said TV host Ruvilson Fernandez, explaining the secret to his tight friendship with "Dare Duo" partner Mare Nelson.

"Ruvilson prefers Asian girls with bangs," said Mare at the recent launch of the QTV 11 show. "Mare likes girls who are petite and sweet," countered Ruvilson.

Before they were formally introduced by a mutual friend in 2002, Ruvilson said he knew Mare only as a host of the ABS-CBN program "Sports Unlimited." Ruvilson was with GMA-7's "Unang Hirit" at the time.

"We get along because we love to travel and we're both funny and flirty guys," Ruvilson admitted.

Do you seek each other's opinion when it comes to dating a woman?

Ruv: When any of us is dating a girl, we have to consider if she can hang out with our barkada. Acceptance of a girl in the group is a big thing for us.

If you're going to star in a movie, who do you want to team up with?

Ruv: I have an emails request for Isa Calzado. She's very talented. She just makes everyone in the room look funny.

Like you, she's single.

Ruv: I let us, Jessy Garcia, happens to be one of my best friends. Boys have this understanding—you don't court with someone else's ex.

Mare: I can't think of anyone to put beside right now. I'd pick anyone from Mariel's Top 100. Unless get asked to be a judge for that one, no—it's tough.

What do you do when girls throw themselves at you?

Ruv: You may find this hard to believe, but most men don't like aggressive girls.

Mare: If a girl throws herself at you, it's flattering but it's also a turn off, especially for most guys in the Philippines. It's the same way when a guy flirts with a girl. She'll feel flattered but that doesn't mean she'll go sex with him.

Have you received indecent proposals?

Mare: Yeah. We simply say no. Things might be different, though, if we're still in college. (Laughs.)

Ruv: Unlike in the past, we now have a lot of responsibilities to think about.

What's by far the most difficult dare that you've done for the show?

Mare: That would be figure skating in a mall full of people. My answer then: I can barely stand up on skates.

Ruv: Add to that some semblance of a routine, complete with costumes, the skimpy half is big.

Mare: We're extremely mindful of what the public is going to answer up with.

Ruv: We've learned not to give any gimmick answers, especially after the figure skating dare.

TAKE FIVE

Are you aware that your audience is mostly female, who are bound to suggest that you do sexy stunts?

Mare: People are so used to seeing us doing it, anyway, so what's new?

Ruv: Sexy scenes, no topless one nipples!

Mare: We are constantly reminded by our producers that this is a family show.

What's the weirdest dare that you've faced up to in your life?

Ruv: In "Amazing Race" we had to eat eight pieces of baba in one minute—that was tough.

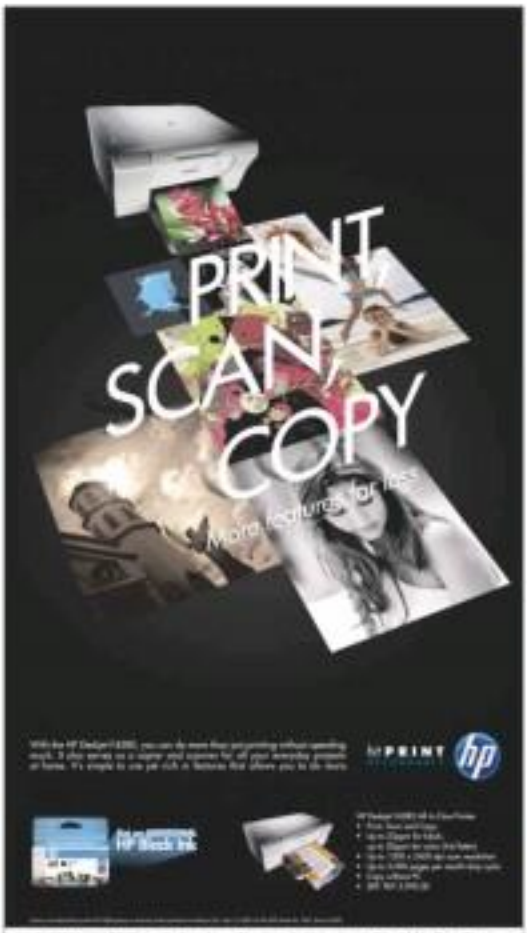
What scares you?

Mare: Ruvilson is terrified of ghosts.

Ruv: I love scaring myself.

"Dare Duo" airs Saturdays at 8:30 p.m. on QTV 11.

lmedrano@inquirer.com.ph



Of seminal human impulses

Nestor U. Torre

IN A RECENT MEDIA FORUM, some Broadcasting majors asked: What makes a TV show a hit? Some hopefully humorous answers: There's star value, something "old" (traditional) and new, good pre-and post-programming, scandal and controversy mix.

On top of all these elements, a key consideration appears to be a basic drooling factor that we can best describe as "seminal human impulses." By this we mean age-old drives and instincts that are instilled by scientists' format.

Dads vs kids

Those thoughts are prompted by the success of the new hard version of the US game show, "My Dad Is Better Than Your Dad," which pits teams of fathers and children against each other, with the dads doing their best to lead their respective kids to victory by vanquishing the competitors in a series of physical and mental challenges.

The show is doing well, at least partly because of its focus on people's competitive instinct in general, and formerly leadership, procreativeness and strength, in particular. It's also a subliminal lesson that fathers should teach their kids some skills needed for human survival, as this energizes the show's competitive edge as well.

Thus, most families no longer have to hunt wild animals down to survive these days, but seminal human impulses die hard, as the instinct for survival remains strong even in the urban "jungle."

Driven by these seminal forces, the "Dad" game show's local version is but natural not to be a success—as have other TV shows that comedy plug into similarly basic human drives and needs.

The need for family unity is the driving force behind the success of the epic show "Family Ties." Families that play well together get to bring home the biggest bucks.

Similarly, the need for comedy has energized generations of television's stalwarts in drama series, teleseryes, etc. Feeling safe and bearing from TV characters' conflicts and comedy skits are deemed so important that the cultural connection remained strong even since television was invented.

What about the enduring popularity of comedy shows? Ah, that plugs into another instinct, the human one high and freedom from fear that results